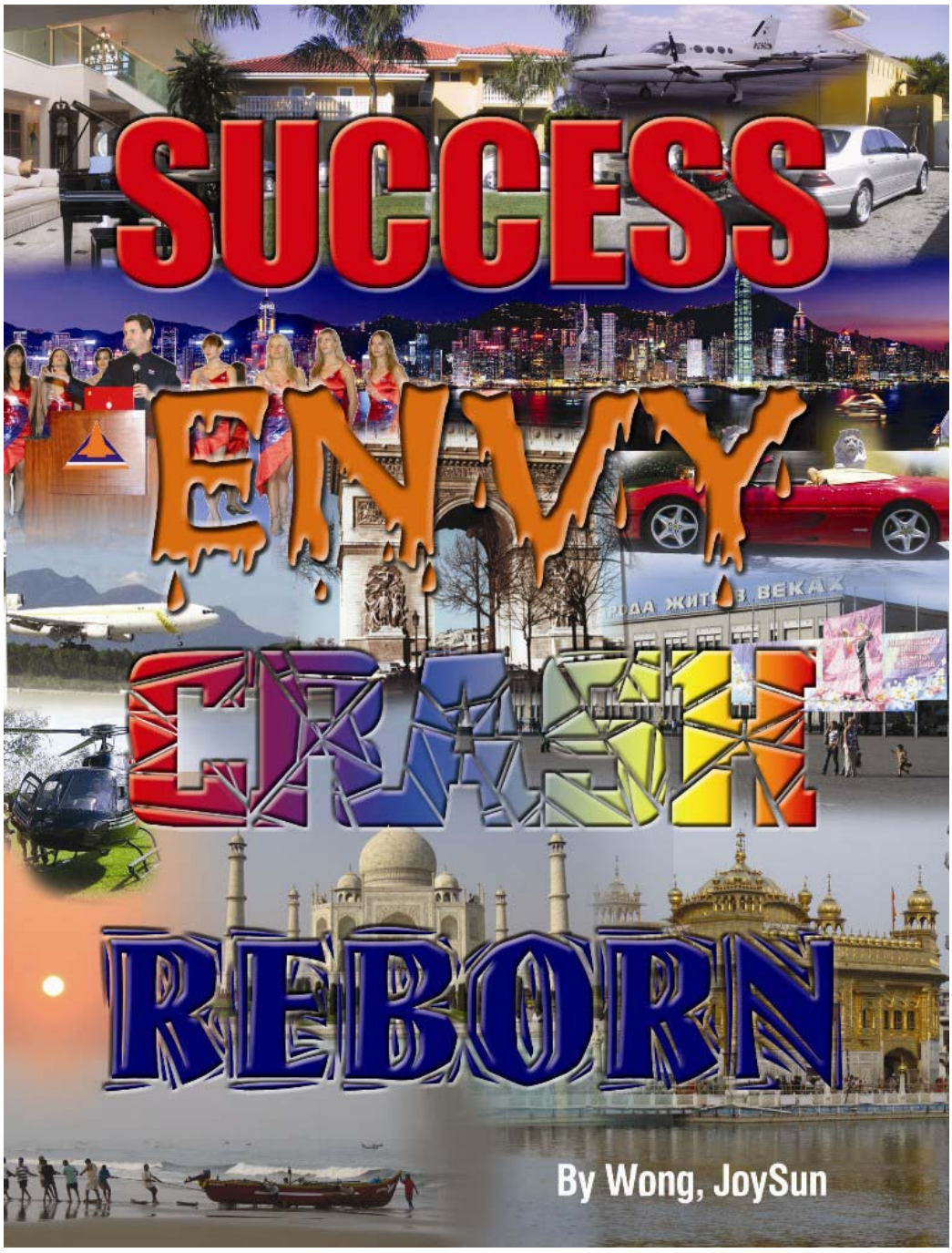
SUCCESS
ENVY
CRASH
REBORN
By Wong, JoySun

SUCCESS ENVY CRASH REBORN

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JoySun Productions International

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During my life I have passed through so many places and have shared with so many people that it is difficult for me to thank or to mention everyone; however, I would like to thank everybody I've met for the knowledge and experiences we have shared, even though some were fleeting moments.

I want to thank my parents who have always been by my side and my beloved children who are my seed. Also my sister who has always helped me through the hard times. And finally to the women who have passed through my life and who have taught me a lot during our time together.

I dedicate this book to my brother who in his brief 33 years has taught me so much. My love for you will remain eternal.

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The people of India

The people of Uruguay

To the people of Sea View Hotel – Calangute, GOA

To the people of TGI Shack – Calangute, GOA

Vladimir Sita

PREFACE

If you like books as well as a true life that is full of fantasies, dreams, success, love and wealth, this is the book for you, true life that reads like fiction.

When I started to write I had no idea my writing would evolve into a book one day. In truth the genesis of my writing is a desire to help people live a better life.

It is my sincere desire that the experiences of our hero Tony Lima, will teach you, so that you can avoid some of his errors. If I could help at least one person, I will be happy!

You will be learning the story of a Brazilian immigrant in search of the American dream. And who finds it in all of its glory. You will also follow the effects of the powerful force of envy, his failure s and an amazing renaissance.

So, come with me to live this adventure!

Everyone is familiar with Frank Sinatra's ballad, *"My Way."* It is our hero's life theme. Follow the lyrics carefully.

My Way (Frank Sinatra)

And now, the end is near;
And so I face the final curtain.
My friend, I'll say it clear,
I'll state my case, of which I'm certain.
I've lived a life that's full.
I've traveled each and every highway;
And more, much more than this,
I did it my way.
Regrets, I've had a few;
But then again, too few to mention.
I did what I had to do
And saw it through without exemption.
I planned each charted course;
Each careful step along the byway,
But more, much more than this,
I did it my way.
Yes, there were times, I'm sure you knew
When I bit off more than I could chew.
But through it all, when there was doubt,
I ate it up and spit it out.
I faced it all and I stood tall;
And did it my way.
I've loved, I've laughed and cried.
I've had my fill; my share of losing.

And now, as tears subside,
I find it all so amusing.
To think I did all that;
And may I say - not in a shy way,
No, oh no not me,
I did it my way.
For what is a man, what has he got?
If not himself, then he has naught.
To say the things he truly feels;
And not the words of one who kneels.
The record shows I took the blows -
And did it my way!

A WORD FROM THE AUTHOR

Dear Reader:

My pact with you is: To let you know this story based on true events, without modifying them in order to make the book saleable. I have just stated true facts. The names of the characters and some places have been changed, but the whole story is true!

I would like you, when you start reading, to be part of the story. Please let your imagination take you there. By doing so I know for sure I will somehow get in touch with your deepest feelings and therefore I will sense that my task has been accomplished.

I am absolutely convinced that if I can get your attention, this book will make a difference in your life, for the better, of course.

That is my sincere desire!

Thank You!

So fasten your seatbelts and come with me!

Wong, JoySun

PS: I would like very much to hear from you. Please write your comments to: joysun@joysun.org

CHAPTER ONE

SUCCESS

*"If **A** is success in life, then **A** equals **x** plus **y** plus **z**.*
*Work is **x**; **y** is play; and **z** is keeping your mouth shut"*

Abraham Lincoln

"My life has been like a movie," said Tony Lima as he smiled at the crowd of friends and business partners. They'd gathered for an opening party at his recently renovated residence in Cocoplum, Coral Gables, Florida. *"This is the only way that I can describe it."*

With his wife Sharon by his side, the Brazilian-American founder and president of Exbrus Corporation had good reason to smile as he basked in the aura of his stunning surroundings, the product of his and his wife Sharon's imagination and talent.

In the best tradition of glamour, glitz and success the party swirled around equaling a Hollywood event with every bit of understated elegance as beautiful women in evening wear and men in their best suits partook of the food and wine that again was unequaled.

After buying the extended structure and leaving it only with its walls, Lima started to give the home a personal touch. Working together with the Brazilian architect Ed Peroba, he defined his specifications, turning out to be of delicate and contemporary patterns and an exterior of multiple terraces.

The finished home is a gracious Spanish Colonial with ochre walls and an orange Spanish tiled roof. The grounds are green and manicured with tall coconut palms, trimmed to perfection, adorning the property. Well-groomed cypress trees hug the walls.

This particular attention to details resulted in an inner living space of 7,584 Square feet. The floors are covered with aurora perola Brazilian marble. Moreover, all the vast woodwork, starting with an amazing multiple entrance door, the wood of the TV room and even the family's bedrooms, and all the finishing touches are done exclusively with selected Marfin and Tauari wood from South America.

In the comfortable TV room a particular characteristic is the custom built leisure and security system that controls the home video, audio, temperature and the interior and exterior lights from a simple touch on a small monitor screen. *"I have my own home cable TV here,"* he said. *"I can control it by Internet from any place of the world. This is very important because I travel a lot, and I can see my kids."*

Touring the house with his guests, using wide gestures, Lima said, *"Each of the seven rooms has a balcony. I imported the St. Thomas stones from Brazil for these balconies and for the floor around the pool,"* he continued. *"It is a very rare stone because even on a very hot day, this stone remains cold. You can walk on it barefoot even if the temperature is 100 Fahrenheit outside."*

On the lower level a gleaming black grand piano plays counterpoint to the shining marble floors and provides tasteful music for the party.

Outside by a spacious tiled terrace a swimming pool shimmers in aqua splendor and on the adjacent canal sits a gleaming white and teak 52-foot yacht at the dock.

A man of humble origins Tony epitomized the American Dream. With a keen insight for business he found global success in the logistics arena of the import- export trade.

Following in the tradition of entrepreneurs such as Andrew Carnegie and John Jacob Astor, Lima learned his business from the ground floor up, starting as a car salesperson in California. Soon, however, he discovered his true niche initially exporting automobile parts and then expanding into several other areas of the import-export business.

"Tony is a real visionary," boasts his partner and close friend, John Blacker, Jr., Chief Operations Officer for Exbrus Corporation in South America. *"He saw the necessity of overcoming the obstacles and boosted the business of importing-exporting a step forward, providing End-to-End Service, emphasizing time saving and cost cutting; he saw a way to overcome obstacles that could slow the process of merchandise transportation and took the importation-exportation business to a higher level."*

At present, South America is his primary market but Lima has set his sights on the international market. *"Our focus allows our customers to concentrate all their trade operations in one supplier, who is able to manage all aspects of an international logistics operation from acquisition through delivery; we offer individualized customized solutions that combines a fixed delivery time and cost reductions,"* he explained to his guests. He also told them that the company delivers the best high-tech information system and Internet tracking to provide complete and efficient advanced logistics at a competitive price.

Lima founded Exbrus Corporation in California in the late eighties. As Florida became the Latin America gateway, he moved his headquarters' offices to Miami in 1997. Even though, he has homes in other countries, he and his wife decided that their main home would be in Cocoplum, Coral Gables, FL. The couple intends to raise their three kids, who are six, three and one years old, in the USA.

According to Lima, the refurbishment took approximately a year. He wanted Sharon, a talented decorator, to use her experience for personalizing the interior. Each piece of furniture was imported from different countries where he has business.

Lima proudly walked through his home, showing each rare piece, such as a Chinese chandelier custom made for him, highlighted by each little statuette, hanging over the entrance tall foyer, and impressive bathroom accessories imported from Italy.

"Tony is a determined individual," said Robert Johnson, a Controller for Exbrus Corporation, an ex brother-in-law and Lima's friend for over 20 years. Johnson, a native of Kansas, and an aerospace executive fluent in Portuguese, recalls how Lima drove from Los Angeles to Sao Paulo in 19 days (10,000 miles) just to announce the

Exbrus Corporation Internet tracking system. *"Retreats in business by no means intimidate him; he is focused and obstinate".*

Even though at the age of 42, Lima has reached enormous financial and personal success, he remains close to his roots supporting two Brazilian charity funds.

Located in his home town of Jaguariuna, near Sao Paulo is the *"House of Children,"* a home for 300 abandoned and orphaned kids. Orphans are a rising social problem in Brazil

"As a Third World Country, Brazil is still fighting to provide this sort of public service to help these children," said Marcos Paz, Exbrus Corporation International Director and an enthusiastic supporter of this project. *"Tony is dedicated to this important cause giving his own money and taking his own time to raise funds to expand the installations."*

Lima was clearly touched when during the evening he showed his guests a special DVD presentation of the orphanage. *"These unfortunate children need hope*," he said. *"During hard times in my life, I was always motivated by reading about people who gained success despite everything against them."*

With the same spirit, Lima also takes part if a vocational academy called *"Project Tesourinha,"* in Sao Paulo, where underprivileged young people can study to become beauticians. Nowadays, the school has 400 students and is growing.

At the end of the evening, while he was looking outside his well-equipped office, Lima revealed that it was only the beginning of his personal as well as philanthropic projects. He thinks that this particular project, estimated at approximately $3.5 millions dollars was *"amusing,"* but he anxiously awaits his true master plan *"a dream home"* in the years to come.

When asked about his business aspirations, he paused and said with a barely veiled smile,

"There will be always challenges and this is what I love."

(Written by local reporter)

Challenges! Tony had no idea about the effect of his words! He had no idea about what lay ahead. It's easy to judge someone at any specific time. Most people forget that everyone has a past. Let's go back in order to understand his story.

CHAPTER TWO

CHILDHOOD & TEENAGER

"The direction in which education starts a man
will determine his future life"

Plato (427 BC - 347 BC)

Tony was born in a tiny inland city in the state of Sao Paulo, Brazil, called Guaira, the eldest son of Mr. Ulysses Lima, a farmer, and Mrs. Amelia Lima, a housewife. He also had a sister and a brother, Sandra and Richard. Tony lived on the farm owned by Mr. Lima's father until he was 13 years old; he always had to walk long distance to school, first to the farmer's school and later to the city school, where he had to ride a bicycle for 3 miles, and take a bus into the city.

The farm he lived on had no running water, no electricity, in fact, no modern amenities whatsoever. Yet his mother would always motivate him to be a great entrepreneur. Mrs. Lima's greatest dream was to see Tony became a great doctor. As for Mr. Ulysses, he wanted his son to become an agronomist.

Ulysses went bankrupt in 1973 and they were forced to move to the city of Jaguariuna. Mrs. Lima, orphaned at three was raised by her aunt with the help of this caring woman, became partner of the flower shop her aunt owned.

Tony saw his world change overnight. It was like paradise having electricity and running water. And the best TV! It was like a dream for him and a huge boost for his ego!

Despite his prior hardship at school he had always had good grades, being one of the best students in his class. Now, having all the comfort anybody could desire, he never made school on time. He would leave school early, and by his first year of high school it seemed certain he would fail. He had bad grades, was missing classes, and made the wrong friendships.

Mr. Lima had always encouraged Tony to go to a specialized agricultural high school. It was a boarding high school financially maintained by local governments in other cities. But there was no way Tony would give up all of the comforts he'd grown accustomed to. No way!

But in the middle of this crisis, about to fail at school and having to face his father with this news, he felt forced to make the greatest decision in his life. He decided to accept his father's offer because that way he would have to start his first year of high school over again, and having failed at the local school then wouldn't have seemed so bad.

Backpack on his shoulder and feet on the road, off he went, trying to find an agriculture school that would accept him, at that late time of the year. He tried several schools near Jaguariuna, but no luck. The only school where he was able to find an opening was in the city of Garca, State of Sao Paulo, about 300 miles from his hometown.

March, 1976 he arrived at the agriculture school of Garca, and the first thing they showed him was his quarters which he would share among 5 other students. There were lots of strange people, no locks on the front door, which seemed to have been kicked in by someone, and bunk beds with damaged mattresses.

This type of free public school had all kinds of people, especially low class students from the north of Brazil.

On his first day he faced his first challenge. One of his mates from his apartment approached him to tell him that one of the guys had one kg of marijuana and he wanted to notify the principal about this fact. He did not know what to do, but agreed with his mate and both went to speak with the principal.

The following day, the principal searched in every apartment and luckily they found the drugs and expelled the student. Nobody ever found out who had been the snitcher. (Imagine if this person would have been a member of a gang? Tony and his mate could have been killed over this!)

At the end of the first semester (winter vacation in Brazil) he was feeling he had had enough and told his parents his intention to return home; this was not a place for him. The food came with fried mosquitoes and the spaghetti was served with worm-holes. He had to work like a dog, and on your birthday they celebrate by throwing you in a waterhole of green scummy water. Happy birthday to you! No way, he gave up! He would not stay a minute longer in that dump!

But somehow destiny had already been written. Professor Gines, for whom Tony felt a profound admiration, for also being an entrepreneur, decided to dedicate his last class explaining to everyone the benefits of the agriculture school, and how important it would be for them.

The clever professor knew that after every winter vacation, 50% of the students would not return. The professor articulated all of the advantages in such a way that he convinced Tony to stay in school.

So, in the second semester Tony returned with all the enthusiasm of this world. Not only had he decided to stay but also he had asked for the principal's permission to let him study by nights at another high school in the city that specialized in Chemistry. And he got the permission.

He really loved the Chemistry classes; they were his passion as well as Science. He also enjoyed Catholic Church youth groups and made lots of friends, especially girl friends.

He also made friends with this senior student at the boarding school named Marcio, a tiny skinny guy just like Tony, and everyone had such respect for him, and Tony really admired him for that. Marcio taught him the power of the word; most of his colleagues used to resolve matters fist fighting with each other, and Tony learned very soon the power of words, which can hit people much harder than a punch in the face!

He became one of the best students in both schools, and maintained high grades. About this time he also became the manager of the chicken shed in the agriculture school, which meant not having to work so hard anymore. Of course he had earned the

admiration of all teachers but unfortunately the envy and jealousy of the students. So it was until his second year of high school that good times were rolling.

The next step was to enter the university. But in Brazil one has to attend an additional private school *(prep school)* to pass on the university test *(vestibular).* He took some vocational tests and everything pointed at him becoming an electronic engineer. So he decided to go to the best universities in Brazil. He talked his parents into paying for the most expensive private school education thus enabling him to pass the test. He changed to a high school in the city of Mirassol where he attended a private school at night in the city of Sao Jose do Rio Preto (10 miles away).

At the end of the year he applied to all the best universities in Brazil to take the tests (Mackenzie, Maua, USP, Fuvest and others). He was surprised at the number of candidates for each university; there were at least 30 people per opening. 30 to 1!

Time passed and the results of the tests came. It was no, no, no, no, and no pass! The same answer everywhere! Until one of his last options, the University of Jaguariuna; on the third call, his name finally appeared, he was the happiest man on this earth; the responsibility of using his parents' money was so deep that he did not want to disappoint them and himself as well.

Since the University of Jaguarina was in his parents' town he lived with them again. It was difficult for him to adapt to that situation one more time, having lived alone (dream of every teenager) for the last three years. Although he was no longer a kid one is always a kid for parents.

All the time he had been away from home Tony had followed from a distance, the challenge his father faced to recover from bankruptcy. He hated to see his father angry, especially with his mother. Sometimes when he had a chance to visit them, he would choose not to only to avoid seeing the tension between them.

This experience lad Tony to make a pact: He would achieve financial success at any cost, even if he had to sell his own soul to the Devil! His steely determination was unmatched. To him all the problems were because of a lack of money and he resolved to make a lot of money and bury financial problems forever.

So he decided to stay with his parents and make the best of it. He would try to go to the university and work at the same time. Following the advice of one of his teachers from the agriculture school, Tony bought a car, in spite of not having a dime in his pocket. He financed the purchase with a personal loan from the bank. And another dream came true.

Having his first car, even though only an old 1973 VW Bug, was a big accomplishment for him at the time.

He graduated as an agriculture technician and got a job as sales representative at a farmer's supplier company. However, he wasn't doing well at his work; he was a failure as a salesman. And to make matters worse, the university routine was so different from the high school.

He tried a second job, now selling automobiles at a local Fiat dealer. Fiat had just arrived to Brazil. Fiat's procedure was something like this; the dealer hired the sales person but offered no training, believing that selling was something you were born to, and sent them out to sell cars. Of course Tony ended up at the Sales Manager's office.

The man was blunt. *"Tony, I will give you some advice: You can do anything in your life, except to sell something!"*

This insult piqued his pride and rather than discouraging him, had just the opposite effect.

These were interesting times in Tony's life. Among his friends in Jaguariuna, he was the only one who had a car. One day they were sitting at a bar and some of his friends wanted to go to a dance club, in a nearby city 30 miles away. *"It is a hot party,"* they said.

Tony tried to decline but his friends insisted and so they went. When they arrived he found that his pals had no money for admission, so he ended up paying.

They were worn out and sleepy as they drove home about 4 a.m. . Approaching Jaguariuna, he remembered having read in a newspaper that a new entrance road had just been opened the previous week. He decided to take the new road because it would be a short cut. He remembered having driven few miles further that night when suddenly a pile of rocks appeared in the middle of the street. He slammed on the brakes as hard as he could, but there was not enough time. He hit the rocks, smashing his windshield and his nose!

He ended up at the local hospital. And here is the interesting part. He used to feel rejected at the University; he felt he had no friends. But that day, although his nose was bigger than his face and he looked like the ugliest guy on earth, to his surprise, the entire class of the University had came to visit him. It was a very unexpected show of support and friendship and it touched him.. Tony felt great. Even a new girlfriend decided to stay with him.

That accident gave Tony something that was missing in his life up until then. Self-confidence!

But things began to deteriorate. By the end of 1979 his life was a disaster. He was not able to keep up with the University; he couldn't keep a job and if it hadn't been for his parents' help he couldn't have made the payments on his car.

CHAPTER THREE

GOIANIA, GO BRAZIL

"Life consists not in holding good cards but in playing those you hold well"

Ecclesiastics (ch. IV, v. 20)

Well, he thought, no way can I go on like this. I must change my life. He had heard his parents mention the city of Goiania, state of Goias, Brazil (300 miles away); the city was growing very fast, because it was nearby Brasilia, the capital city of Brazil. His parents would go there once a month to sell plants (nursery) in swap markets, with success. They had made friends with a couple who lived there.

Tony looked at his life and decided to change. Several people in his family had made careers at Brazil's national bank, the Bank of Brazil. The bank was growing fast and a branch manager could earn four times the salary of a graduate engineer.

So the young man had a new destination, Goiania. He would transfer to a university in Goiania, where he could study at night, and look for a career position in a bank.

He applied for a job in every bank in that city, and finally thanks to the help of that couple, he was able to get a job at a Japanese bank – Banco America do Sul. He had a successful interview and was supposed to start work the following month.

While he was waiting, he saw an ad in the local newspaper. It was the biggest ad of the day. It read: Professional Sales Person wanted. High salary with benefits and international traveling. Since he was doing nothing, he decided to check it out. The company was holding interviews at the best hotel in the city. He was shocked to find that over 500 people had applied and they were seated in a large conference room in order to take a test.

After the tests were completed they began calling out the names of those who were rejected. When only 30 people were left in the room they called the name of a person sitting by Tony, and they asked for Tony as well. He was told, *"We just want to know who you are."*

Interesting fact: as this guy sitting by Tony was doing the test he kept muttering, *"I know this test, I have done it before, and I know the trick."* Tony did not know what he was talking about it.

After that, the company representatives began the presentation. So far nobody had told them what type of service or product would be sold. As the presentation unfolded it began to look more like a priest or minister trying to sell Bibles! Every one was very curious to find out what it was. Finally at the end they showed the product: They were

some recorded audio-cassettes with famous Brazilian anchors (Cid Moreira & Sergio Chapelen) where they motivated people to achieve their dreams. The idea was simple: *repetition*. You hear something so many times that you program your mind to make it. For example, when you want to get a photocopy, you may say get me a Xerox, instead of photocopy, you hear this so many times that you change the names of things. So the proposition of the tapes was: You listen to good stuff every day, you will program your mind to do good things. This was the idea of this company called *"Success Motivation Institute".* And it was music to Tony's ears! It was everything he had wished for.

He had no doubts; he gave up the bank job, and went to the sales training of the new company. Later he learned that he had achieved the second best score of the initial test.

These tapes changed Tony's life. He would listen to them day and night. He even recorded his own tapes, where he would say: *"I will get it! I will be successful in selling these tapes! I will make it!"* And he would go all night playing the tape, even while sleeping.

The rest is history. His first check equaled the value of a brand new car in Brazil! His happiness knew no bounds. Finally he was able to sell! And his clients were the biggest entrepreneurs in the city, which increased his own status to their level. He was grateful for the help of his sales manager, who kept him motivated and helped him to accomplish the sales.

Always close to God he also enjoyed the local Catholic Church youth group and made lots of friends, among them one person who used to live in Los Angeles, California. She was enthusiastic about America and shared it with him.

Going to the USA was one of his biggest dreams since childhood. He had tried before, but lacked the needed financial support. The stories and all the things he had heard had thrilled him.

By this time the sales manager, who Tony liked very much, got involved in a scam related to drugs. The guy took some money from the company and was fired! They replaced him with a very conservative guy who did not share the same philosophy of Tony and the old sales manager. Once more Tony saw new opportunities on the horizon, new doors opening.

CHAPTER FOUR

LOS ANGELES, CA USA

"The man who acquires the ability to take full possession of his own mind may take possession of anything else to which he is justly entitled"

Andrew Carnegie

New Destination: Los Angeles, California. July, 1980. With the name, Mrs. Dominique Welch, the sister of his woman acquaintance in Goiania, in his pocket, he returned to Jaguariuna to tell his mother that he was going to a seminar promoted by the company in Los Angeles. He dared not tell her he was going to the US without any plans. She would have a heart attack! So he was off to the USA.

His plan was to fly to Miami and catch a train to Los Angeles, but when he arrived in Miami he learned that flying was cheaper than the train. He had one thousand dollars on his pocket, and had spent three hundred for the plane ticket. So finally he arrived in Los Angeles.

Like many newcomers Tony was amazed with L.A. It was very different from home. The cars were different. The people were different. And one of the most amazing things was that cars would stop for pedestrians. Unbelievable! Even in Hollywood (considered a bad neighborhood at the time), you would start crossing the road and all the cars stopped! It was a dream come true.

Because Mrs. Dominique Welch was traveling in Europe that week, Tony had to wait a week until she returned.

Even though he barely spoke English he had lots of fun. His European appearance caused some people to confuse him with a local, and he would laugh about it.

One day he went to the local McDonald's (at the time there were none in Brazil), and he asked for a hamburger, and the person asked him, *"Is it for here or to go?"*

He understood that to mean, *"Where are you from?"*

So his answered, *"From Brazil, From Brazil*." The confused counter person simply shrugged and handed him the bag! Later he laughed about it.

Finally Dominique arrived. He was expecting an old lady, but when this beautiful girl with tan skin, driving a Mercedes convertible showed up, he couldn't believe she could be his friend's sister. She was totally different than he had imagined!

She drove him to the tallest building in Los Angeles, where her lawyer husband had his office. It was like being in a movie.. The surroundings were so beautiful; here was all the technology, all the glamour of Los Angeles!

Dominique introduced him to one of the firm's attorneys who worked for her husband, explained to him Tony's intention to stay and work in the USA and asked him what the young man's options were.

The attorney advised him that the best option was to return to Brazil. I guess he gave the wrong advice, considering that he was speaking to Tony Lima.

Later that day Dominique took him to the office of Bank of Brazil, which was nearby, and introduced him to the secretary of the bank who told him he must meet some people from Porto Alegre, a city in southern Brazil, who could help him.

In the morning of the following day Dominique drove him to Monrovia, near Pasadena, to meet the people referred by the secretary at the Bank of Brazil.

When he arrived one of the people, Henrique, told Tony, *"You got no time to lose, you must get the Social Security card"* and took him to the local Social Security office. In an amazing coincidence they learned that this was the last month you could get Social Security without restriction to work in the USA. If he had waited a few more days, he would not be able to get it.

Henrique invited Tony to live with them until he found a place to stay. He also helped him to get a job as a dishwasher at a nearby Japanese restaurant called Shogun. He gave a loud, *"YES."* He would make four hundred dollars per month plus two hundred dollars of tips. That's it: Tips! The Japanese people would share everything at the restaurant. Unbelievable! All this cultural learning was fantastic. Another, much needed benefit was free meals.

Well, he had a job now. So he decided to buy his first car in the USA. It was a beat-up 1969 Ford LTD. But he was thrilled with it. It had automatic transmission, power steering, air conditioning. This was a new luxury for him.

So the next step was to look for a place to live permanently and also to look for additional jobs. In the local paper he saw an ad to sell Amway products. He had no doubts, called for it and met an American couple who lived in the nearby city of Alhambra. They were a middle age couple with no kids, so they offered him an opportunity to work and to rent a room in their house, even though he only spoke a few words of English.

The American couple would take him to all the Amway meetings, where most of the people were Americans; he did not understand anything, but he was amazed at the new things he discovered. The houses, the carpets, the kitchens, the ceiling, the people, etc. again everything was so unique and so different for him. It was so interesting to perceive the values by someone who never had these before and yet so many people took it for granted.

There was a time in one of the Amway meetings, when they were talking about goals for the money to be earned by selling Amway products. When someone asked Tony what he would do with it, he had no hesitation. He said, *"I want to buy a Chevy TransAm."*

Everyone looked at him surprised. He did not know how the auto finance system worked in the US where you walk into the dealership and with little or no money drive the car home, especially a cheap American car. But for him this was the great thing!

However, selling Amway products was not his future. It was a very interesting concept, but for a person who did not speak English and knew few people, it was very hard to make it.

In the meantime one of the roommates had left the apartment of the Brazilians *"gauchos"* (name given to the Brazilians born in the state of Rio Grande do Sul) and

they invited Tony to live with them. He accepted immediately because it had been hard for him struggling with a foreign language and not hearing his own native tongue.

Things at work were going well. He was promoted to a busboy now. The old busboy, a Brazilian kid, had quit because he was going to vacation with his parents. Tony wasted no time, worked very hard, and got the admiration of most people at the restaurant. At the same time he changed his visa from tourist to student.

One day the restaurant promoted a party and offered a contest for all employees. The winner would receive a TV set for the best performance of the employees; it could be as a singer or a comedian. So Tony decided to be a comedian. Now, try to picture this, someone who barely speaks English trying to imitate some Japanese cooks, who also did not speak English. It was hilarious! Everyone laughed so hard that the first prize was unanimous. He won. Hands down. He was very happy. Can you imagine his feeling? Being new in the USA, at the job, barely speaking the language and winning first prize!

One of Tony's decisions about learning English was that he would learn ten new words everyday; he did worry about the pronunciation but the meaning of it. It seemed to work well and after six months he could communicate well.

When the Brazilian kid returned from vacation, he was expecting the get the busboy job back, instead the manager gave him the dishwasher position. The kid was enraged at Tony and started a war with him. Tony decided not to fight back and quit the job.

In the following week he got a job as an assistant cook in another restaurant nearby. The manager told him to start the following week.

So he decided to go to Las Vegas with some friends. After all he had a new job and some money saved by now.

When he got to Vegas he could not believe his eyes. Even though he has seen a lot of Vegas on TV. Yet in reality it was awesome. All the lights, all the people, the impressive casinos, this was a real *"mirage"* in the desert. He was amazed to see what could be accomplished, this fantastic, magical oasis in the middle of nowhere!

After a great weekend he came home very motivated to begin the new job. Not only did he have a new and a higher position, but a better salary as well.

At the new job he got a surprise. The manager told him that she hired someone else. His heart sank. He was so disappointed. So he had to get another job, and started to apply at all the restaurants, supermarkets, pharmacies, etc. He would walk around Valley Blvd, a long street in Los Angeles, going to every shop filling out applications. Nothing. It seemed that all doors had been shut.

By a month later in December he still had not been able to find a job. Finally he saw an ad in the local paper for an opening to work at the Salvation Army to collect donations in supermarkets and pharmacies. Wow! Finally he got a job. He was relieved because he had completely run out of money by now. His parents had called him and asked him if everything was OK. It seems that parents know when the kids need help. Not wanting them to worry he told them everything is OK.

So to survive without money he would get some donations, which people would put in his hands, a steady supply into the Salvation Army bucket. He used two dollars a day to buy hamburgers until he got his first check.

He persisted in finding a permanent job, until he finally got not one, but two new jobs. One job was as an assistant cook at the Sizzler Restaurant and the second was as a dishwasher at the Elks Club in Monrovia.

He worked hard day and night, starting at 4:00 AM and not finishing until 11:00 PM Slowly things were getting in place. A while later he got a new job as a bartender at Shakey's Pizza that helped him a lot with the English, because he would talk to lots of people now.

In early 1981 some new *"gauchos"* came from Brazil to visit his roommates. They were a group of 12 with a crazy idea: They would purchase motorcycles 750cc (the biggest motorcycles available at the time by Japanese manufacturers) and they would drive all the way to Brazil. What a wonderful idea, he thought! I want to do it! Although he was in no position to do it at the moment, he convinced his roommate Celso that they, together, would go in July of 81.

Wonderful! All planned now, Tony and Celso bought the motorcycles, Tony got a Honda 750F and Celso a 750K (for motorcycle lovers). Now Tony is this skinny guy weighing about 140 lbs, 5'8" riding a bike weighing about 500 lbs. What a combination! Having bought all they needed in the way of maps and supplies, they were ready to go.

A week before departure Tony and his roommate, Celso go bowling with Celso's girlfriend and her two sisters. His girlfriend had just learned to ride a motorcycle and she was riding one of Celso's (Honda 400F), with one of her sisters in the backseat. On their way back home from bowling, at about 1:00 AM they were stopped by a traffic light and they got to the side-by-side position. When the traffic light changed to green Celso's girlfriend drove off first, just in front of the other's eyes a van coming from the opposite side crossed the street on the red light and hit her right in the middle of the bike. They were taken to the local hospital, his girlfriend with only bruises, but her sister broke her leg in three places and had to go to surgery.

So Celso decided to put off the trip and Tony decided to ship the bike by boat to Buenos Aires, Argentina and flew back to Brazil.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE HERO!

"It's kind of fun to do the impossible"

Walt Disney

August 1981. Tony arrived back in Jaguariuna. He was now a superstar. His parents prepared a very big surprise welcome home party with all his family and friends. Everyone admired his courage. Living in the USA for one year by himself with no help from his parents.

September 1981. Mission: to bring the motorcycle from Buenos Aires to Jaguariuna. Tony believed that it would be easy to get the motorcycle from Argentina customs and bring it back. He flew to Buenos Aires, found a customs broker and began the process of clearing customs. He found then that it is almost impossible, because just like Brazil, that country requires all kinds of paper work. He had to talk with many authorities to get it clear, and finally he got it! He had run out of money but the customs broker liked him so much, that not only did he charge nothing for the service, but loaned him US $150.00 to get back home. Little did Tony know that all this knowledge would be very helpful in the future!

He left Buenos Aires on a very cold morning and started his trip back to Jaguariuna. The challenge now was to get a temporary permit at Brazilian customs. Luckily he had no trouble. There is lots of rain in the south of Brazil and finally after 2,000 miles he arrived in Jaguariuna. It was worthwhile, since he had lots of fun with the bike in Brazil. Since the import of autos and bikes had been forbidden since 1976, few people had this kind of bike in Brazil.

Thanks to his parents' credibility he started his first new entrepreneur experience buying and selling cars. He would buy cars on a hold check basis and would sell it for a profit and then pay the seller.

He also made a new friend, Gary Nobel. He and Gary had a lot of fun together. Gary had many girlfriends, who he entertained at a little castle he had built in Jaguariuna.

Gary Nobel is an accountant in Jaguariuna and works for a jeans manufacturer. He is about the same age of Tony and at that time he was going to the college. Tony had always admired him for his ability to conquer women. He was good! One day he would profoundly affect Tony's life.

Everything was good back in Brazil, he could not complain. He was making good money, had lots of girlfriends, but something inside of him was calling him back to the USA. So in March of 1983 he decided to return to the US, this time to immigrate permanently. His visa had expired and he had heard that getting the visa over in Europe was easier than in Brazil, so he decided to go to Europe for 2 weeks and then return to the USA. He invited Gary to come with him, but Gary wanted to finish college. He promised Tony that he would meet him in Los Angeles when he finishes college.

Tony asked his Uncle Frederico (Mr. Ulysses' brother) if he could borrow US $1,300.00, because he didn't have enough to return to the States. Uncle Frederico lent him the money.

Uncle Frederico had always supported Tony in everything he had done. They have lots of empathy for each other.

He had fun in Europe, visiting Portugal, Spain, France and England. Staying in youth hostels he made many friends.

Tony had one particularly interesting adventure in Europe. In Paris all he could get was a hostel with a big room and thirty or so beds. He found that there was no way he would sleep there, afraid of having his personal belongings stolen. So he went to the front desk and complained. He said, *"I want a single room."*

The clerk said that the only way to do so was if he pays for two people.

Tony smiled and said, *"No problem I'll pay it,"* since it was only ten dollars more. So he got a single room on the second floor of the hostel. To his surprise there was an excursion of girls from Switzerland on the second floor. They were all blonde and beautiful, a Latino's delight.

He asked some girls in the corridor, where the men's shower was and they pointed to the only one available. He soon learned that it was shared when he walked in and saw all these naked women taking a shower. That was a Kodak moment! It really required a photo. Although this is very natural for Europeans, this was not natural for him, so he got very embarrassed and returned to his room to shower in private later.

Later he made friends with two of the girls and they went out for dinner; they had some wine, got drunk and had a wild night together. That was a fantastic moment! This alone made it worthwhile to come to Europe, he thought. Needless to say he will never forget this wonderful time!

He flew from London to New York. He really wanted to fly by the Concorde, but the ticket was very expensive. He visited his cousin who worked for Pan Am Cargo, got to know a little of New York and flew back to Los Angeles.

He arrived on a Thursday morning and went back to his job at Shake's Pizza. When he had gone home to Brazil the manager had told him, that if he came back one day, Tony would get his job back. So he went to check it out and to his surprise as he walked towards the door at about 10:00 A.M. the manager recognized him, opened the door and immediately asked, *"When can you start?"* He felt like the happiest guy on earth, and the same happened at the other restaurant (Sizzler Restaurant). He must have done something right.

It seemed as if he had never left Los Angeles. He returned to his old life. But he has never accepted what he has. He wants more, he wants to rise, and the only way is to get other jobs, so he keeps searching for new jobs and soon he gets a new opportunity.

Now as an assistant manager at the Kentucky Fried Chicken in Sierra Madre, he was eligible to be promoted to store manager in a few months. This was a pleasing prospect. The opportunity to be a manager. Wow! That would be great! he thought.

Everything went well; he got a place to live near work He loved his new job and dedicated all his time at the work always trying to improve the place. Sometimes he had to exchange chicken with the other KFC stores and he made friends with a girl, Christine, the Assistant Manager of the Monrovia KFC. He started to date her.

Some months went by and he got a new offer this time. This time from Charles Welch (Dominique's husband) who offered him a job as a driver and personal assistant. There are some times when our ego speaks louder. Everything was going well at KFC, his promotion was just about to happen, he had worked in every store around, and he had made good friends with the local supervisor. But the driver personal assistant job sounded more glamorous and so was an offer not to be turned down. He accepted the offer, however, it would not last 90 days, even though with all that glamour he felt like a duck out of water. That was not his place yet.

He was on his way to work one day on the Harbor Freeway, when still working for Charles. While driving his Mustang in the fast lane he noticed a car parked on the right side of the freeway, and from his view he saw three flat tires. Tony kept looking at the parked car trying to solve the puzzle of how this car could have got three flat tires. All of a sudden the ongoing traffic stopped because of a typical LA freeway traffic jam and he crashed into the car in front of him. To make things worse he had no insurance. Later I will mention the result of this accident.

He tried to return to KFC, but was too late, he had lost his chance. So he found two new jobs at other restaurants, as a waiter and as a night attendant at a gas station.

Meanwhile he was still dating Christine. In one of his telephone calls to his mother in Brazil she kept saying that everyone around his age in the family was getting married. She was asking him when he would get married. At this time he held a student visa, and he wished to get his Green Card, resident status, although it made no difference for him at the time. So he added one thing to another, and one day he proposed to Christine. To his surprise she accepted immediately.

Christine Heinz was American born of German descent, 23 years old, brunette, beautiful brown eyes, a happy person, down to earth, always wanting to help everyone around her.

By now, he had learned that unlike Brazil, divorce in the USA was a very common thing. So he thought, if this doesn't work, I will divorce. See, this is the thing, if something in your mind has a second option, trust me that will be the option it will take.

So as he decided to go ahead and get married, things really got serious; her family was Catholic and planned a big wedding. Tony's family, his parents and two uncles with their wives came for the wedding. He was very happy to see his parents come over for the wedding, so he could show all the things he had discovered in Los Angeles. He couldn't wait to share all this new learning, new places; it seemed his life was a mirror of his parents; he must share everything with them.

On his wedding day he was so happy to see his parents. But personally he didn't really feel like the groom, but like somebody else at the wedding. His honeymoon was with his parents and uncle; they had lots of fun, but I am not so sure if Christine felt the same way. She did not speak Portuguese, and neither his parents nor his uncle could speak a word in English, but she always seemed to be happy.

The day his parents left, Tony felt, for the first time, a very strong emotion.. He always was the one traveling; he had never had anybody leaving him behind so there was an emptiness he had never felt before. He was sad.

Time went by and a new opportunity arrived. His new father-in-law worked in a very big printing company, George Rice & Sons in East Los Angeles that specialized in annual reports for major companies, such as Coca Cola, Arco and American Express. Tony then got a job as a clerk in the Shipping Department.

His duties were to fill out forms, ship goods out, replace drivers when needed, and also to pack goods at the warehouse. But he was not satisfied with that; he wanted to learn everything about the graphic arts company. So he managed to make friends at all the different departments and learned as much as he could. His favorite department was the Sales Department. Most of the salespeople would drive Porsches, Mercedes, BMWs, etc, and boy, that was what he was striving for. He wanted to be a printing salesperson in the near future.

Christine got pregnant and his marriage went as originally thought: Not well. They squabbled but Tony decided to make the best out of his marriage and they went on with their lives.

At work Tony was OK; always learning new things; his thirst to learn was impressive. So one day he was at his desk and his boss Javier, a Mexican guy, was talking on the phone. He heard his conversation with an old boss of his, and Javier was saying that he knows nobody at the moment. Tony was paying attention to the conversation and it sounded as if someone was looking for somebody to work, so Tony gently asked Javier what the conversation was about. Javier related that someone for whom he used to work was looking for a person to work as a shipping supervisor in this other printing shop. Tony instantly flashed a big smile and said, *"Why don't you refer me?"* See, to understand a little, Javier did not really care much about Tony, because Tony was the son-in-law of his boss. So Javier said that he had no experience, so how can he refer him? Now, watch Tony's reaction to this:

"Javier, I'll make you a proposal; you call the guy right now, refer me for the job, and if I get the job I will pay you US $500.00. Don't worry about the experience I know I can handle the job."

The Mexican looked at him wide eyed , not believing what he had just heard, and reconfirmed with Tony. He turned back to his desk, phoned up his old boss and said, *"I have just found the person you are looking for."*

For Tony, this deal made lots of sense; the salary he would get would be double, and a week of pay would be enough to pay Javier off. And he knew he could do the job. Not to mention he would get a higher position.

Bingo! No problem. Tony handled the job just fine. He was able to negotiate with transportation companies, got better deals and handled all the things that needed to be done. But he still was not happy; he wanted more. He really wanted the position of salesperson; he felt that if he could be a supervisor, why not be a salesperson. He had proved to himself he could do it. A semester went by and he got an interview in a small printing shop.

He went to the interview and although his English was OK by now, he still spoke broken English, but his determination and enthusiasm were stronger than ever. After

the interview the Sales Manager (Oliver Jr.) thanked him for coming and he felt that was a no go.

So after he walked out the door, he came back just like Columbo does in the TV series and said, *"I really want this job and I have some money saved. How much can I pay you to get me an opportunity to show you that I can do this job?"*

For a moment there was silence in the room. I guess Oliver Jr. was trying to understand what was going on. He never had heard anyone with such determination. So he extended his hand to Tony and said, *"You are hired. I never saw anyone wanting a job as bad as you. You deserve a chance."*

Well, he got it. He had no idea how to do it. Although he had a successful experience selling the cassettes tapes in Brazil, he never had tried to sell anything in the US, especially in English.

They say that the first thing you should do when selling something is to make the customer like you and trust you, and that seems like something that Tony could do very well. He knew the secret. And that made Oliver Jr. like him very much. So he decided to help him, as much as he could, and the first thing he did was to give a set of training tapes from a well know sales trainer in America, Tom Hopkins. When Tony began to listen to the tapes on his way home, he got the light in the top of his head. He thought, that's it! That's what I need!. So he spent the whole night listening to the tapes, and boy, that was the first time that someone showed him how to walk in place, and walk out with a sale!

After that he signed up for a 3-day seminar with Tom Hopkins, and that was unbelievable learning; he finally was where he wanted to be. This is what he needed to achieve success and money. He loved Tom Hopkins, got all his books and cassette tapes, and literally slept with it every night.

May 1985, Arthur Lima is born, first son of Tony and Christine. Tony was very happy, with his first kid, although his relationship was not working as well as he expected. In the meantime he brought his younger brother Richard, now 15, to study and live in Los Angeles with him.

The training at work was very intensive. Oliver Jr. signed Tony up for every kinds of training possible. And that was what Tony had dreamed about, to have a proper sales training.

Remember the traffic accident Tony had before? Well, now he was sued by the insurance company. He had just got his credit established in the US, and so he went to an attorney to find out what to do.

The lawyer recommended filing for personal bankruptcy (Chapter 7) otherwise there was no way he could walk out of this. Tony argued with him, saying that he had just established his credit, but the attorney assured him that bankruptcy was the way out.

This turned out to be bad advice, from an unprofessional lawyer. Tony had no properties, the worst case scenario would have been that Tony had to setup a payment plan. Not even mentioned was that the insurance company went out of business a year later. So Tony made his first big mistake in the US, filing for bankruptcy. He would be penalized for the next 10 years, lacking credit and being treated almost like a criminal.

Oliver Jr. really wanted to help Tony, knowing about his relationship not working well. He motivated Tony to participate in a seminar called *"Life Springs"* which is

more like spiritual related training, showing you why we're here, our life purpose, how we perceive all things that happen to us and relationships.

After this seminar Tony had decided to divorce; he realized that neither he or Christine was happy, so he believed even with his son Arthur being a little over one year old now, that divorce was the best solution.

So he has a long conversation with Arthur and explained that he believed that this was the best option and he would always love him, and no matter what they would always be father and son. That nobody ever will change that.

In the middle of this difficult period Tony was trying to sell printing jobs that required lots of knowledge, which of course, Tony did not have. Failure was a sure thing coming up. So he decided to return to Brazil until things cooled off a little.

CHAPTER SIX

THE RETURN

"God doesn't require us to succeed;
he only requires that you try"

Mother Teresa

September, 1987. Tony returned to Brazil and found his father in financial trouble again, this time about to lose his property, the farm land which he had inherited from his father.

Since Tony needed some time off to go on with his life, he did not hesitate and went to help his father. The first thing he was able to acquire was a new farm property in the city of Tangara da Serra, MT, in western Brazil, 1,100 miles from Sao Paulo . Somehow he was able to purchase the property by himself and exchange his father's property, taking the risk out of losing it. He was motivated by his father, who had always wanted to get property in this growing area of Brazil.

He made a new project for growing crops with artificial irrigation systems; he worked like crazy day and night, and got all the available financing at banks, and purchased all the necessary equipment while his father stayed back in Jaguariuna trying to negotiate with banks and loan sharks to whom he owed money.

Mr. Ulysses Lima: To understand Tony's father better we have to go back in time. Mr. Lima was the oldest son of six, from a very traditional family inland of the city of Guaira, SP, 300 miles from Sao Paulo. His father, Antonio Lima, a man with a controlling personality, never gave Ulysses the chance to think independently; he always decided what the best was for him. And Ulysses conveniently accepted and so everything that went wrong with his life was blamed on his father. After his father's death Mrs. Lima took on the same role as his father, and later Tony did the same thing for him again, and life goes on…

So Tony now lived in Tangara da Serra in his own place; he was a farmer now, with high-status for his experience of living in the USA, and he made lot of friends, including the mayor of the city. As a Don Juan no words need to be said about his many girlfriends.

This is another interesting and funny moment for Tony. One day his father came to visit him in Tangara da Serra, and Tony wanted to show his father how well-known he is in the city so he took him to visit the mayor's office. The mayor welcomed them in his impressive air-conditioned office. As they were leaving the office his father and the

mayor kept extending the conversation. Tony wanted to leave because he had eaten too much the day before, and he was having some major gas problems but the conversation kept going. He could not resist anymore, so slowly he started to blow a fart, thinking that may be OK, but things went wrong and it happened to be the worst stinking fart he ever blew. So he walked away and waited for his father about 50 yards away. The scene got very funny, his father thinking that the mayor was the one with flatulence and consequently the mayor thinking that his father was. So when his father got into the car he said, *"This mayor has no manners*!" And Tony could not resist and started to laugh his head off. And his father continued, *"And you left me there alone."* That was when Tony told him that he did it. Boy, his father wanted to spank him.

A few months went by and one day Tony was at a rodeo festival in Tangara da Serra with a friend. And when he saw a beautiful girl as one of the jury for the festival, he asked his friends who she was, and they told him*, "This one is not for you; she is engaged to get married!"*

Tony's mind was programmed; if someone said to him, *"You can't get it,"* he challenges that! It was not different this time, and a few weeks later he was dating Sophia.

Sophia Nardi was Brazilian born of Italian descent, 23 years old, brunette, brown eyes, very good looking, extremely outgoing personality, hard worker and a dedicated person.

So in few weeks Sofia decided to call the wedding off and to date Tony. She lived with her sister in town, and when she revealed the news to the sister, her sister got really mad. "*How could you do that? Everything is set, how can you call it off? Who is this new guy? What do you know?"* And Sofia's sister demanded that she move out of her house. Well, Tony felt guilty about it and since he was living by himself he offered her to move in with him temporarily. At this point Tony was not ready for another steady relationship, but when he least expected it he was back in another relationship.

Tony's father was not able to manage some of his debts, and since the property was titled under his name, one of the banks secured a lien on the property, making it impossible to get any future financing for the farm.

August, 1988. Tony returned to the USA. Even having all kinds of disagreements with Sophia he decided to bring her with him back to the USA. Later they married and they applied for her legal residence.

This time Tony decided to do what he really liked. To sell cars! He had met a Porsche dealer manager some time ago. So he visited him and explained his intentions. The manager told him if he is going to work as a car salesperson he should try a Ford dealer, because he could make mistakes, and still make the sale. At that time Ford was the number one in sales in the USA. He followed his advice and looked for the best Ford dealer around and went there to get a job. And got it.

It was how he started working at Manhattan Ford in Manhattan Beach, California. Finally he was able to sell in the US. He was one happy guy. He was hired as greeter, the salesperson you first see at the dealership; he was the salesperson of the month for several months, and then he was promoted to closer, the man who negotiates the deal and later as a Fleet and Sales Manager. He always had one of the highest pay-checks of the dealership. Most paydays he got the check from the general manager, who could not believe his achievement.

Some of the experiences he has at the Ford dealer:

On his fifth month working at the dealership, he broke the record and sold more cars than anyone else had done at that dealership and made about US $7,000.00 that month. The average was less than $1,200.00 per month. However the following month he only sold three cars and got the very minimum wage. What a disaster! This is what happens when success comes so quickly and you are not prepared for it. A great challenge for a lot of companies is that they do not provide proper training for the salespeople when they over produce.

Another time he was trying to sell a car to a young lady and her father at the dealership, and it was late at night (10:00PM) Even though the daughter loved the car, her father could not make a decision to purchase the automobile. Tony had tried everything, and nothing seemed to work. No way would he make the decision now. Tony felt he was doing the right thing and as the couple was leaving the dealership Tony got on his knees and said, *"I beg you, for God's sake please buy this car!"* Instantly the father changed his mind and agreed to get it, and the daughter was so happy.

The most difficult part for the finance manager at the dealership was after adding everything to the sale of the car the payments were still lower than what Tony had closed before with the client. When people buy cars they have two things on their minds, how much do they have to put for down payment, and how much are the monthly payments. Tony knew that very well and his persuasion capacity was incredible. Many times he has got complaints to close the sale with lower payments.

In a very short time Tony was promoted to a fleet manager, and if you wanted to buy a car and talked to Tony, you for sure would be driving the new car home. No matter what kind of car you wish, he was able to outsell the 14 other dealers (different brands) of the group he worked for. He was the only one to earn it.

Some of his best clients were the employees from Varig Brazilian Airlines. Varig had set their base in Los Angeles, for the continuous flights to Asia, and they would bring their staff from Brazil. When they first arrived they had no credit, but they would receive, as an addition to their salaries in Brazil, an additional allowance of over forty thousand dollars a year. So one day Tony went to the office of Ford Motor Credit, explained the situation, and got an exception rule, that all employees of Varig will get instant approved credit. So the news went around and everyone from Varig would receive an internal memo, saying that to purchase a car look for Tony Lima, he got credit approved for you. Of course it did not take many months until the competitors found out and got the same benefit.

He also managed to work his own hours, although he always was there, but he got the right to do whatever he wished. That was Tony Lima.

Tony tried to visit his first son Arthur, and every time he visited him, he had an argument with Christine, so to avoid this he stayed away from Arthur. I believe he uses this as an excuse, as he was not ready to be a father.

He also applied for his US citizenship. He was so proud to be an American Citizen by now. He finds the US to be the place where all your dreams come true. The Land of Opportunity! The country where the laws work and your rights are protected, where

people have opportunity to do whatever they wish, the country that does not overcharge you with all kinds of taxes. The country where you are free.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE EXBRUS CORPORATION IS BORN!

"Be great in act, as you have been in thought"

William Shakespeare

On April, 1989 the Exbrus Corporation was founded by Tony, initially to deal with the purchase of computer parts and other products to Brazilian clients. Around this time his marriage with Sophia ended.

The formation of his business to export cars to Brazil happened by accident. One of his Varig customers come to visit him at the dealership, and brought him a copy of a Brazilian newspaper, *"O Globo"* and showed him a photo in the auto section of a Ford Thunderbird with the license plate of a competitor of his. He got furious! *"How can this jerk be selling cars to Brazil in Los Angeles, and I know nothing about it?"* He thought. So he got on the phone get a hold of the importer in Brazil, and found that this person had a contact in Burbank who made the purchase of the car for him.

To makes sense of this situation, understand this. Brazil had closed down the import of automobiles since 1976, and with the new President Collor, has opened it again, and everyone was crazy about getting import cars, after so long of only being able to buy local junk cars, produced by the local manufacturers.

So Tony called the guy in Burbank and soon he was dealing directly with the importers in Brazil and a new phase of his life began. The Exbrus Corporation exported more cars to Brazil than any other dealer in California at that time. Tony would buy cars from all states of the USA, because to find the specific cars required by Brazilians was hard to do (most, manual transmission) and Tony would handle that very easily.

About this time he met a friend and business mentor, Michael Santini.

Michael Santini: He had started his own business as a Ford dealership, by himself and was able to make it a very big success. His dealership was among the three biggest Ford dealers in Brazil at the time. Michael was extremely knowledgeable and knew very important people in Sao Paulo. He also is known as *"Midas"* in Brazil because of the successes he enjoyed at all businesses he had started. They have a mutual passion: Computers.

One thing led to another. The Exbrus Corporation, having started from nothing, took off. Tony was obligated to create a logistics operation to export and import auto parts between the USA and Brazil.

Import auto parts and clear it out of customs. This was the first legal auto parts logistics operations put together in Brazil at the time.

As things were growing and he needed help he asked one of his best friends, Alfredo, to help him in Los Angeles.

Alfredo Alcasar: This was the guy who Tony had met back in Goiania, right before he came to the USA for the first time. He was a nephew of Dominique and had been in Los Angeles for a few years now. He is one of those people who goes out of his way to help people out.

So, Tony had not asked his brother who was living in Los Angeles, because he had a job and was doing very well. When he met his brother and told him about the opening, immediately Richard offered himself to help Tony. That was a surprise for Tony, he did not expect that, but it was his brother, so he told Alfredo that he would not need him anymore. Alfredo was rightfully hurt. Hard decisions for Tony, but after all he would have to protect his brother.

Richard Lima was Tony's young brother, Richard, since childhood had been around Tony. He had taught his kid brother just about everything. Tony would feel more like a father to Richard than a brother. He came to live with Tony when he was 15, had gone back to Brazil, and returned again, but Tony always was present at his life.

Richard and Tony rented a house in Redondo Beach, and that was the first official office for the Exbrus Corporation in the USA, and they started the work with the auto parts logistics operation.

What Tony had no knowledge of was that Richard, since he was a teenager was consuming drugs (cocaine), and by this time he was already addicted. Tony never imagined that this was something that could happen in his family. He had been around, since he arrived in Los Angeles, with drugs just about everywhere, but never felt the need to use them. He always thought why I need that stuff if I am happy as I am. Why drugs?

Unfortunately that was not the way that Richard saw it! He had an advanced addiction. Richard did not work during the day; he would sleep all day and would work all night. Several times Tony had discussions with Richard about working regular hours. Although things in Los Angeles worked almost 24 hours, this was not the way Tony wanted the business to be run. Richard was responsible for the Los Angeles office, and Tony was selling out.

Tony demanded a lot from Richard, like a father demands from a son. Everything had to be perfect. Tony knew this was a chance of a lifetime that was not to be missed. No mistakes were acceptable. This caused a rift and there were many discussions about it.

But even with his crazy time schedule Richard would manage to do everything as Tony wanted: perfect. As a matter of fact perfection was a part of the Lima family. One of the best things that Richard did was to hire a new employee for Exbrus: Jack, who worked in the company until it re-located to Florida in 1997.

Jack Smith: This American born guy was one of the best employees that Tony ever had. He was what you could call a multi use person. He could do any job you asked for, from packing to talking to the president of any company.

Michael Santini Company was Exbrus' best client at the time, and among one of the things they would purchase was computers. And that was the next thing that Brazil had opened up by now. You could now import computers in Brazil as well. So,

during one of Tony's visits to Michael in Brazil he introduced him to Jorge Contin, a computer technician, and Michael made a proposal to start a new business in Brazil to sell computers. Tony knew all the suppliers, Jorge could handle all the service and Michael could do all the administrative work and deal with possible clients as well. It seemed to be the perfect combination, especially with all the knowledge and power of Michael Santini, so both accepted the offer.

The new business started in Brazil, and everything went well at first with Tony making the purchases, Jorge with the technical division and Michael with administrative. But soon Jorge and Michael got into a disagreement, because there was little bit of conflict with his old business. So Jorge got out of the partnership.

Tony had to handle Jorge's duties now as well, and to make things a little more complicated, even though the imports are legal in Brazil, people still prefer to buy on the black market to avoid high taxes charged by customs and government. This problem is still alive today.

Tony didn't feel comfortable in proceeding with this business, and he was very concerned with Michael's friendship. This alone was more important then anything else. So he talked to Michael and he agrees to close the business out.

Around this time, a supplier had introduced Tony to these gentlemen, John Blacker, Jr. and some other guy. They were looking for new partnerships.

John Blacker Jr.: He had been introduced to Tony as an entrepreneur from Itacu, he had a company that specialized in computer automation for large companies, and he was an electronic engineer. He also worked for a helicopter manufacturer in Brazil, and according to him had worked during the Falklands War (Argentina & British - 1982).

Tony told Michael about these people and Michael asked him to do a background check on both people. And later he said he would talk to John Blacker Jr., The idea was to make him a partner of the Computer Company or to sell it to him.

Tony went back to Los Angeles, where Michael and Blacker were supposed to meet at a later time. Later they talked and to Tony's surprise no deal was made, and the business was closed out.

Michael decided to use the building they originally rented for the business, to establish a new business for his wife (money factoring) and Tony rented two rooms to follow his auto parts operation and car sales.

Interesting fact: One of the first tools used to market your services in Brazil; the Exbrus Corporation uses the fax machine. In Brazil very few people had fax machines by this time, and the few that had installed them near the big boss's office, and they would pray to receive a new fax, and Tony made use of that. So 100% of the target was achieved!

Time went by and the Exbrus Corporation would grow very fast. They now had offices in Los Angeles, Sao Paulo, Miami and the city of Goiania, Go Brazil.

Tony had learned the American way of doing business, and applied all his knowledge in Brazil. He setup a distribution company in Goiania, to take advantage of tax benefits, everything officially done under the laws of Brazil. And with a demand much higher than the offer, he saw the opportunity in his hands.

Things were going so fast, that Tony had to quit his job at Manhattan Ford, to dedicate himself exclusively to his business. He started hiring new people, initially sales people, managers, etc.

One of the first things Tony did was to bring his father to work with him in the Sao Paulo office. His father was doing nothing in Jaguariuna and he helped Tony a lot with his charisma and kindness with new clients and employees. Everyone loves Tony's father. Not to like him is almost impossible.

The first sales person for Exbrus in Sao Paulo was Brad, this young guy, in his early 20's, son of one of the customs ladies, who had advised Tony in a lot of operations. Tony liked the kid and even though he had no experience, he trained him and soon he became a good professional.

Blacker initiated business with Tony, and they made friends later. Tony met a Korean representative for the fax division in Los Angeles, and he made an offer to Tony to be the exclusive distributor for Brazil. Tony had little interest in this operation and offered to share it with Blacker, who accepted it. Blacker was an excellent sales person. He was able to sell the first container in no time. So came the first shipment and someone had to go to Korea to follow the first air shipment. Since Brazil's laws are so strict, no mistake could be made with the shipment, otherwise it would take lots of time and fines to clear it out of customs. Tony had no problem in going to Korea to follow this, but he made a suggestion to Blacker to go and to follow it through. To Tony's surprise he accepted, and did an excellent job! He followed Tony's instructions and everything came out perfect.

Blacker and Tony became very close friends, always going out together, and always doing some business together as well.

Exbrus did not stop growing and, Tony asked Blacker to help him out, since he had a lot of experience, worked in several large companies, and had owned his business for some time. When Tony would be in Los Angeles Blacker ran the business in Sao Paulo. And one of his first decisions was to lower the commission of Brad (the salesperson). Tony liked Brad very much, and he would not agree to that, but Blacker suggested that he would convince Brad to accept it. What Tony did not know is how Blacker would manipulate people. This is how he did it: he first told Tony that, then he told Brad that Tony had ordered him to lower his commission.

That was a sure thing, Brad got very mad at Tony and encouraged the operational manager to quit and to establish a new corporation, as they believed that they had learned everything by now and could do it by themselves.

This was the first business surprise for Tony. However Tony discovered the move before it happened, but it was still hard to control such a situation. It was a small company and the two key persons in the operation were now gone. Not to mention the impact on clients when they learned this news. He got very upset and wanted to exterminate both of them!

Tony's advantage was that he had created the entire process and he knew every part of the operation so he could train new people for the job in no times.

So he went in search of new professionals to work at the Sao Paulo office, deciding to hire someone with experience and a decent background, so surprises like that would not happen again. One of his clients Davie Palumbo, sent him a referral for an ex coworker Francisco, who had worked in a multinational company as an engineer and according to Davie a very honest person. So he hired Francisco as the new sales manager for Sao Paulo.

Davie Palumbo: This person was introduced by Blacker to Tony and became one the best clients of Exbrus. His company specialized in promotional sales, and they sell to companies such Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, Frito-Lay, etc. He also became a good friend of Tony's.

His personal life was going fantastic, nothing to complain about. With all the financial success, having the best cars, going to the best restaurants, and having as many girl friends as he wished. But he felt alone and decided to look for someone, but this time did not want to make the same mistake that he had before. So he devised a plan to find someone according to his needs. He made a profile of the perfect girl for him and went to search for her. But however we plan these things, they never seem to work out the way you expect.

CHAPTER EIGHT

IT'S LOVE!

"It's love, it's love that makes the world go round"

Unknow Author

May, 1994. On a weekend visit to Jaguariuna, Tony's Uncle Frederico invited him out for dinner at a local restaurant. And there she was, the most beautiful girl he had ever seen! That was not love a first sight…it was instant love! During the evening he learned her identity and Don Juan went into action again. She fit his profile to a T and he just had to date her.

Sharon Lozada, a Brazilian, was 23, of Spanish descent, blond haired, blue eyed, very beautiful.

A typical inland Brazilian girl, Sharon had few dreams beyond marriage. She was the only daughter of four children, and in her early twenties. At this age in Brazil there is a lot pressure from family and society to get married. She had recently broken up with an old boyfriend, who had promised to marry her, and she was very disappointed with that.

So here comes Tony, at the right place and right time. A week after they began dating she asked him to marry her!

Tony was in love with Sharon, but didn't want to make the same mistake again, so he agreed to marry her in one year, although he was a bit uncomfortable with the obligation part of it. Once he had agreed, Sharon kept the pressure on twenty-four hours a day. Not a day went by when there wasn't some reference to the obligated marriage.

With the exception of the marriage pressure, Tony was happy and loved Sharon. They enjoyed each other's company and had a lot of fun together; he couldn't wait for their weekend time together, since he was spending more and more time in Brazil.

Christmas, 1994. Tony invited Blacker and his wife to spend Christmas together in the USA, and also brought along Sharon and his family. By now Tony's sister, Sandra, was also living in the USA.

Interesting fact: Around this time while Tony was in the USA, the Customs services in Sao Paulo went on strike. This was not uncommon in Brazil, so the only way to clear goods out of the country was through the Department of Personal Goods. This was not the conventional way, but was the only way to do it. When the Exbrus van arrived at the Sao Paulo office, some people identified themselves as a Federal

Police (similar to FBI in the USA). Even with the proper clearance paperwork, the police claim was not in the name of the company. One needs to understand the level of corruption in Brazil: the idea is to make you guilty enough to negotiate your way out of it. So when Tony was called and notified about it (he was in L.A.), he called Michael Santini to negotiate.

Michael soon learned that they were asking for thirty thousand dollars, ten times the value of the merchandise. Michael was about to negotiate it down to half of that amount when Blacker arrived and authorized payment or the original price.

Tony did not understand this decision, but later Blacker explained that he did not want to mess with these people, and of course Tony had to pay all of it. Later Tony learned that Blacker had set up the whole thing! What are friends for?

Most of the time Tony was in the US Blacker had helped him on a part time basis, but he was not a full time yet.

Anyway, even Tony was so mad with this situation in Brazil that he kept on his planned travel arrangements. Blacker and his wife arrived: they had lots of fun traveling through Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle, Victoria and Vancouver.

Around this time Tony hired Bernard Silva as an office boy; later this person became a key factor in Tony's life.

Bernard Silva: Used to work as doorman at a night-club in Sao Paulo. He had little other experience. From the northeast of Brazil, he was initially very loyal to Tony. He was a good learner and later became a Logistics Manager.

Business was good as usual, and Exbrus was always growing. I have no idea how to relate Tony's attitudes; would the people sometimes take advantage of the situation. If he was transparent and shared his ingenuity would he regret it?

This time Francisco, the new sales manager of Sao Paulo, got together with clients to open a similar business. Tony thought, I am in the wrong business, I must be teaching future new entrepreneurs!

Not only did he get a surprise this time, Tony also got his first economics changes in Brazil. You see, Brazil is famous for changing the rules in the middle of the game, and to protect the local automobile industries, which were losing sales every day (this time Brazil's General Motors was the one behind it) they increased the import duties from 20% to 70%, overnight. This would impact an increase of over 100% at the final price when you add all the other taxes involved.

It was taxes on top of taxes! I have no idea how the Brazilian people accept that. The government does whatever they wish; it looked like England thousands of years ago.

Tony could not believe all the things that were happening. He saw his world fall apart overnight. Sales dropped 50% in the first month, and another 50% the following month. Exbrus had cars ordered from several dealers in the USA, and he had to cancel it all. It was shit on top of shit.

By now he had already set a date to get married. To cancel it now would impossible.

So he decided to go on, and believed the crisis would not be long so he started to use his lines of credits in Brazil, to keep the business going. He kept his costs steady to minimize the costs of operations; still hoping things would get better. Needless to say, he crashed.

May, 1995. So the wedding date arrived. It seemed that Tony had forgotten all his problems and dedicated himself to this coming event. What is amazing about Tony is that he has the magic touch when it comes to events. So he organized the event very professionally. It was a big wedding and hosted five hundred family and friends. The ceremony was held in a private club. Among the guests were Uncle Frederico and Michael Santini. His uncle was like the reverend and Michael the intellectual. At the last minute Tony decided to speak and got everyone emotionally involved...

Well, Sharon, it finally happened!

I told you when I first met you that I would make you the happiest woman on earth.

I told you that that I would make you my princess!

Well! You are my queen today!

I am not here only to sign a document. The document I have in mind it's much more you and me!

I want to be very happy by your side; I want always to be at your side at all moments. Be it sad or happy moments.

I will always love you! You will be the mother of my kids! You will be everything I ever dreamed in my life.

All this is a dream come true to me, and it's the most beautiful dream of my life (Sharon gets very emotional and tears drop)

Thanks for always being at my side!

I love you so much!

Sharon replies:

I am very touched and don't know what to say, but without a doubt, today I am a very happy woman!

I love you! (Everyone claps)

The whole event was poignant and so touching that few emotions were left out; the place overflowed with love, and was shared by everyone. Love was in the air! Though prejudiced, I thought it was the best wedding I had ever seen. Everyone happy! Everything perfect!

Needless to say it was considered the best wedding ever held in Jaguariuna.

On their European honeymoon, Tony, as usual took some time for the business. He stopped in Madrid to open a new office for Exbrus. About this time the demand for European auto parts was growing, because of all the Fords imported from Spain.

Interesting fact: Among other things Blacker initiated Michael's wife's factoring business (anticipating accounts receivables financing) into the operation. Just before Tony's wedding, during the crisis of President Collor's impeachment, Blacker had a lot of business with government companies, and claimed that he could not pay his debt of over one million dollars because with the crisis his accounts receivables were stagnant. Tony never took part in these transactions. It was done exclusively between Blacker and Michael's wife. Tony always believed in Blacker telling the truth, especially after he was able to recoup the money in other businesses with Michael.

Around this time Tony was spending most of his time in Brazil, trying to get business going, when Sharon became pregnant. Tony decided to close the Miami office and would stop paying the local taxes in Brazil.

Every time Tony's had a challenge on his hands, he needed to get away to solve it; that's the way he managed his life, so he decided to make one of his dreams come true. He would drive from Los Angeles to Sao Paulo; he would not do it by motorcycle, but would do it by light truck. In this way he hoped to regain his energy.

So that's how the *"Great Voyage"* was done. But it would take another book to describe this challenging 10,000 miles in 19 days odyssey through America, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and finally Brazil.

Tony was to meet his destiny as he went on with his life. On the trip driving through Bolivia he met a few Brazilian immigrants who told him all the current advantages of doing business in Bolivia...

After the trip he shared this idea with Uncle Frederico and his uncle related that he also was looking for some new opportunities in Bolivia, he also had talked to few people about it. So they made a pact: They would start a business together. Tony would open an office in Santa Cruz for Exbrus and his son Bryan would buy and run a farm property. Tony also decided to bring along one of his employees, Ernest. He was presently working in the Goiania office of Exbrus.

However before he could go, and needed to settle the late company's local taxes, that were now five months in arrears. Since he started his business in Brazil, he calculated that to date he had paid about one million dollars.

So he went to the local office to try to get a payment plans to repay the late taxes, only to be told:

"If you want to make a 3 months installments, I would do it here, now if you want to make 6 months you would have to talk to my boss at the office across from here, or if you talk to the supervisor above, you could make it 12 months and finally if you go to the governor's secretary's office they can make it in 18 months. Which option would like?"

Looking shocked Tony opted for a talk with the governor's secretary.

At the secretary's office he is greeted with a smile and the statement, *"I know things are difficult nowadays, so I approve it!"*

Tony was astonished. The message was so clear: in this country only those who do not pay any taxes, or defer it as much as possible, move forward. He thought what an idiot I am. If I had not paid I would be in a much better position.

Life is an eternal learning process and as much as you learn, you find that you know nothing!

July of 1996: Harrison Lima is born! He is Tony and Sharon's first son. Tony was extremely happy!

Everything was set and he was off to do business in Bolivia! Tony took the opportunity to return the Ford Explorer from the *"Great Voyage",* because Brazil would not accept importation of used automobiles and Bolivia does. So Tony, Bryan and Ernest drove to Bolivia.

Bryan Lima: Tony's cousin and son of Uncle Frederico. Bryan was very close to Tony's dad and his family. He had helped Tony on several occasions.

Ernest Justus: Tony had met him while he was a kid, back when he was in Goiania. He was the son of the couple that had helped him at the start in Goiania. Ernest was an incredibly honest person. He would change his life after a bad transaction, when he sold his car to a crook in Goiania, who never paid him. The car was everything he had owned at the time. His life went on hold after that.

They arrived on the Brazil Bolivia border right before sunset, and when Tony's asked the local customs agent for a driving permit for Bolivia, the officer told him that he had to go to the train station, nearby, but they would close in about 15 minutes. Tony drove fast on a single lane highway to get to the office before it closed. Ahead of him was a driving circle where you had the option of driving ahead or making a right turn. The officer sitting in the passenger seat said nothing, and Tony kept driving past the circle. As he passed the circle this old beat-up car and crossed the road right in front of Tony's truck and he hit the car right dead center. Tony could not believe what just happened, because he had the right of way. How could this car not see him? So he got very mad and some police officer comes by and tells Tony's that he has to pay for the damages for the car. That was it! Tony looked into the officer's eyes and addressed him in a shrill tone.

"What is wrong with you? This car crosses in front of me; he is the one wrong, not me!"

At this time the officer tells Tony he is going to prison! After a lot of discussion they drove to the local police station and Tony was locked up. By this time Tony had learned that the road that he was driving on would go to the airport, and although he had the right of way, no one ever drove in that direction, because the airport was not operational; all cars automatically turned right and the car that he had hit, had that in mind. So to make a long story short, after a lot of negations between Bryan, Ernest and the police, Tony had to pay for the local's car, and later had to pay off the local authorities in order to be released. And that's how things work in Bolivia!

Learning Fact: Unless you are an attorney, don't ever disagree with anyone with the badge of authority. You will always lose!

Challenge resolved, they drove to Santa Cruz and Tony looked for office space, a local accountant, and whatever is necessary to establish a new corporation, and Bryan looked for farm properties for sale. In one of the visit to farms, on the way back, Tony got the flu, and a high fever, so he asked if Bryan could drive back to the city, some 10 miles away. To make matters worse Bryan hit and killed a cow on the way back. Fortunately they did not call the police this time, as later on they learned that if in Bolivia you killed an animal, you got to jail until they find the owner of the animal, so you can pay up.

Nothing else needed to happen on this trip! Bryan wanted to return immediately. And he swore he would never set foot in Bolivia. But Tony was persistent and as usual stayed, rented a house as an office and opened the corporation. Ernest would manage the new office for Exbrus in Santa Cruz da la Sierra.

Tony returned to Brazil, changed the office location to reduce operation costs, hired a new sales manager, this time a guy name Sebastian Ruskus, an ex manager for Michael Santini Corporation, and started everything from scratch. Then he identified

a new opportunity in Korean auto parts, got new suppliers in Korea, and he was off again.

Bill Fisher – Friend of Tony's whom he originally met in Los Angeles, when he worked for the Ford dealer. Bill came to the dealership one day to get information about a Ford he had purchased in Florida, and from that time on, they had become good friends.

It was Bill Fisher who helped Tony to get back the Exbrus Corporation around this time, and giving him the first opportunity to diversify his business to different areas. Bill had started a new business for soft drink vending machines in Brazil, and hired Exbrus to do all the logistics.

Little by little things started moving. Tony sought new opportunities in different areas. As expected, the Bolivia office was closed down in about a year. The only good thing to come out of it was that it provided Tony a place to relax and get his energy back. Ernest returned to the Sao Paulo office.

In one of his last trip to Santa Cruz, Bolivia by coincidence, Tony discovered that Sebastian Ruskus (the new sales manager) had formed a new corporation in Brazil and was acquiring auto parts from a Bolivian supplier, originally contacted by Tony, without the knowledge of Tony, of course.

This was the last straw! Tony wasn't angry. He was furious! His hatred knew no bounds. *"What is it? Everyone wants to rob me? Why? What do I do it wrong?"* he grumbled.

In Sao Paulo he set a meeting with all employees, and made Sebastian confess. If you could measure Tony's anger that day on a scale of one to ten, it was eleven.

He promoted Ernest to the manager position and decided not to bring anyone new into the company again. He was tired of these bad experiences and corrupt employees.

These people were amazing. They could try to pull a fast one but it never worked. Anything built on a shaky foundation will fall very soon. All those people that did this to Tony did not last more than six months in business. They believed they knew everything, but when it got down to business they knew nothing. And the interesting thing was, that if you worked with a guy like Tony he would want to establish a business for you; he would help you, even if was in the same field. Moreover, I believe that is true for any genuine entrepreneur, as they are not afraid of competition. They welcome it because they know their own capabilities, and nobody steals what is yours, and somehow even if they take from you, it will come back to you some day. And the crook has to live with his misdeed for the rest of his life, and some day he would have to deal with that. And that is the truth.

Meanwhile, Tony discovered that his brother Richard was not well in Los Angeles. Now Tony learned that Richard was on drugs, cocaine, and his sister, Sandra, could no longer handle him. Tony immediately flies to Los Angeles to bring Richard back to Brazil. He found Richard in a very bad situation and it was depressing. That really hurt Tony. And at the same time would ask him, how could he have not seen it before? Why was he so blind?

Tony packed up Richard's stuff and brought him back to Brazil. He tried to get him into a rehabilitation clinic, but Richard would not accept it. Forget it! Ever since he was a kid, Richard's no was firm. He never looks at himself as a drug addict. But he agreed to stay with his parents. And Tony felt relieved; at least he would stay close to his parents.

The connection that Tony originally had with Los Angeles and Sao Paulo started to go down now. Several airlines cancelled the flights from Los Angeles to Sao Paulo; the suppliers would not have good prices anymore and Exbrus did not have the same credit rating as it had it before. New actions needed to be taken – and soon!

CHAPTER NINE

MIAMI, FLORIDA, USA.

"If you think you can do a thing or think
you can't do a thing, you're right"

Henry Ford

Since Miami by now had become the gateway for Latin America, Tony decided to move the headquarters office from Los Angeles, California to Miami, Florida and take upon himself the administration of the company as Jack did not want to move to Miami.

July, 1997. Initially Tony sub leased an office with a supplier: NNR Air Cargo, and developed new suppliers and by coincidence his old friend Sylvio Costa, from Los Angeles, was now living in Miami and unemployed. So Tony hired him and started from scratch again!

Sylvio Costa: Was a friend of Tony's; they had met in Los Angeles. Sylvio had been living with Dominique since her divorce and after they broke up he came to Miami. Somehow Sylvio had been present in Tony's life many years.

Tony brought Sharon and his son, Harrison, to Florida. He managed to rent an ocean front apartment in Bal Harbour, something that Tony had always wanted. It was a beautiful place with a full ocean view and he made sure before bringing Sharon and his son that everything was done, such as buying all the furniture and appliances. And of course Sharon would get mad, because Tony did everything by himself, but that was Tony.

Even with all the comfort that Tony provided, Sharon hated Miami. She got very upset every time Tony's traveled and she was beginning to show the first symptoms of depression.

Trying to make up for this, one day as he was walking along Tony stopped in Cartier's in Bal Harbor and looked at this expensive and gorgeous diamond necklace and earring set. He looked at Sharon and with passion and love in his eyes, he said, *"One day, Sharon, when I achieve success, I will give you jewelry like this. I promise."*

Of course, Sharon did not have any idea that her new husband truly meant what he said.

Out of the blue a lot of business appeared and Tony decided to sell the auto parts division, because at the rate the new business was growing he could not keep up with

that. The auto parts business was much more difficult, and the competition in that area was fierce.

So Tony asked Ernest in Brazil to get names of the best customer's reseller of Exbrus that had a good credit profile with the company, and Ernest indicated two names, but one made Tony especially interested. These people would anticipate payment of their bill; in Brazil this was very uncommon, and thus he asked to set up a meeting with them, next time he was in Brazil.

Tony made sure that the meeting was to be held at their office, and when got there, he met the three partners: Rudy Benson, Severino and Jose who owned the business, LineFor Corporation. Rudy was no doubt the leader, and Tony sympathized with him. Their company, though quite small, was very organized and had trained with a well know government institution called SEBRAE, which impressed Tony.

Rudy Benson: Leader of the LineFor Corporation was an excellent apprentice; he is a very good listener, and he followed Tony's instructions. Tony was impressed by him.

Does luck knock on your door? In this case it did! Tony made a decision to sell the parts division to LineFor; he proposed to sell the whole division, but Rudy insisted that he, Tony, keep 25% of the shares of LineFor Corporation at the time, and Tony agreed.

Following Tony's ideas and establishing their own brand name, today they are one of the most important auto parts brand names in Brazil. Of course, that was due to Rudy's dedication.

Unfortunately, later on Blacker would manipulate Rudy to set up a plan to kick both his partners out and later Tony as well. But that is another story!

Tony and Rudy offered Ernest the opportunity to maintain his job at the parts division at LineFor, but Ernest decided to quit and returns to Goiania, Go.

Life goes on and some important episodes follow:

As Exbrus grew and diversified to different areas, Tony saw a unique opportunity with one of the clients, Davie Palumbo, who worked with PepsiCo and Coca-Cola as a provider of promotional material. Tony had a vision to get those clients as well.

Tony and his ideas! In a lunch meeting with Davie he asked him to reveal his biggest dream. As a matter of fact this a constant habit of Tony, asking people he likes about their dreams. He was always trying to help everyone to make it true. He had this concept of seeing happiness thru the eyes of the people he liked. So, Davie replied that his biggest dream was to own a yellow Ford Mustang convertible. That would be about a one hundred thousand dollars value in the Brazilian economy. Tony smiled and said, *"I want to help you to make your dream come true, and I have a proposal for you. You help me to get two million dollars in sales from PepsiCo and Coca-Cola and I will give you the car of your dreams."*

Of course he motivated Davie to work for him, and did it very well! So in Tony's mind, he was not about to worry about money so much but to gain clients such as Coca-Cola and PepsiCo. That alone would be more value than the Mustang.

And sure enough, in a short time the Exbrus Corporation was working with PepsiCo and Coca-Cola in the promotional gift areas only, but Tony's determination was to be a logistics provider to all areas at both corporations.

The custom order for the Mustang was placed at Ford Motor, and Tony had a very unique experience, sharing the whole process with Davie step by step. Tony initially delivered the car in Miami, and finally after all Customs clearance and licensing he surprised Davie and delivered the car during a lunch at a steak house in Brazil. The

car was specially prepared, gift wrapped and sent by a flat bed tow truck. Davie's face lit up like a child's at Christmas.

May, 1999. Amanda Lima was born, the first daughter of Tony and Sharon. Tony was very happy to finally have a daughter.

And things were moving at Exbrus. The rock was rolling, and the good times were here! Tony was cautious now; all his transactions were on a cash basis; he did not want any credit, anywhere! But Tony wanted even more, so he hired Marcos Paz to make a business presentation for Exbrus. The company was still small and never had a professional business presentation.

Marcos Paz: He too had been referred by Davie Palumbo; he had been a manager for British Tobacco in Latin America, and had lots of experience in marketing. He initially was hired as a consultant and later on as an officer of Exbrus.

Mr. Lima could not fully manage the Sao Paulo office for Exbrus anymore and Tony needed help. He did not know what to do and every time he remembered his past experiences he would have nightmares.

Talking to lot of people he got a lot of advice that the only way to prevent someone from pulling a fast one on him again, would be: to first hire someone that you have known for a long time, check the background, make sure he is a true friend and give this person a share of the company.

The only person who came to mind was Blacker. He had known him for some time now. Michael Santini had done a background check, and he had personally had some good experiences with Blacker in a few businesses they had together. Blacker's business, according to him, was not doing well, and he always had debts everywhere. The only thing bad about Blacker was the past transactions with Michael's wife's company; but he had managed to get government financing in the amount of ten million dollars for one of Santini's corporations; this was the type of Brazilian government loan that most people manage to extend up to 15 years and by the time they pay it off, inflation and other advantages makes the loan payoff to be peanuts (Brazil things!).

Even though after this Santini hated Blacker, and would insist that Tony not hire Blacker, Tony nonetheless at this time had full trust in Blacker and did not know yet about his lies and manipulation.

Tony took the time to think it over and finally decided to meet Blacker and made him an offer that was hard to refuse. Tony offered him a salary of one hundred and twenty thousand per year (In Brazil very few companies would pay such high salary to a director) and in addition to that he would give him 20% of the shares of the company to be paid with future profits. In other words he gave him 20% of the company. Blacker would try to negotiate with Tony to maintain his old company, but Tony was very determined. Either you come full time or nothing. So that was an easy decision for Blacker and he accepted promptly.

Well, things were going well and now meetings with customers at Exbrus office in Sao Paulo could not be avoided. The Sao Paulo office was in a very modest area of Sao Paulo, and did not have an acceptable appearance for some kinds of clients, so Tony decided to move the office to a better place. He leased a house in a residential area and converted it into a very high tech office, for the administration and sales office. His intention was to be in a very quiet neighborhood, so he really wanted to keep it low profile. After the move, the neighbors started to complain, as this location was not

supposed to have offices, and the neighbors got very tough, even taking the case to the local courts. He also hired Carlos Costa as an export manager for Exbrus.

Carlos Costa: He was hired initially in Brazil to be the export manager for Exbrus; later he became the Director of the Chile operations. A loyal, hard worker, he was without a doubt one of the best employees ever hired to work at Exbrus.

Blacker got in the middle of this challenge, and helped a lot, but with no success. So Tony decided, after making a major investment in this leased property, to purchase an office building and to rebuild it according to his needs in a proper business location. They found a place, purchased it cash, hired an architect, Ed Peroba, and started the construction.

Ed Peroba: He was the architect who had followed Tony with all of his construction projects, even in the USA. He was a very good professional and a friend of Tony.

But time was something that he did not have; he had to move from the old office quickly. The situation reminded him of Exbrus's slogan: *"If it's Fast! It's Exbrus!"* That was so much like Tony - since childhood everything he did had to be fast. And it was no different at Exbrus.

They had to work day and night since the architect specialized in this type of jobs and they targeted it for completion in 90 days.

Blacker showed himself to be a professional. One of the first things he accomplished was to bring PepsiCo to work with Exbrus at full range (all departments). He also managed to do the same thing at Coca-Cola. He also got to be good friend with the Coca-Cola buyer, Manny Green.

Manny Green: He had been working with Coca-Cola for over ten years and had built a reputation. Tony liked him very much; he was a nice down to earth person and of course he helped Exbrus to get lot of business with Coca Cola even in other countries.

Tony was happy! Things couldn't be better. Business was fantastic; he already had moved to Coral Gables, Florida, and he had purchased not one, but two houses which valued over a million dollars.

Sharon was now is going through a postpartum depression, and nothing made her happy; she was going to treatment with psychologists and to make things worse, she also got very jealous of Tony, because she suspected that he was going out with a lady responsible for purchasing at PepsiCo.

But, Tony never had the intention, or in fact did anything, with this lady, all he wanted was the PepsiCo business; he knew if he ever had any affairs, it would make things worse, not better. So, this whole thing was created by Sharon's mind. Tony never had an affair with this lady.

In addition, in Sao Paulo Mr. Lima upset Tony because of his way of doing business. He was in charge of Finance, but he never does things on time, he is always late, and the bills are never paid on time, not because of lack of money, but because of his poor business habits. Blacker saw the opportunity and offered Tony the job of handling Finance as well; it would be no problem for him and that was so simple. And no need to say that he was fantastic at doing the job; in the first years he would go through every little detail with Tony, gaining his full trust. He would make account for every penny.

I believe that Tony's biggest mistake was to trust people too much. President Reagan used to say: trust, but verify! And I guess Tony needed this advice at the time. Tony never worried about money; this was something that came to him, and not the

other way around it. He didn't believe that people could rob him, although in the past he had some bad experiences, but now nobody was taking money from him.

Of course, Mr. Lima got very upset with Tony when he was transferred from the Finance Department to a counselor in the company. He also was disappointed because Tony had given a part of the business to Blacker and nothing to him.

Now you have to understand Tony's perspective. For him family was all the same, it would be no different for him. All of those things belonged to the family, and family for him was: Mr. and Mrs. Lima, Sharon, his children, Sandra and Richard. It never crossed his mind to give a share of the company to his father, because he thought everything belongs to the family, and on top of it all Mr. Lima could take whatever he wanted, at any time, and many times Tony had asked Mr. Lima if he wanted some money to acquire anything. Tony never had any secret from his father and always shares liberally all with him.

Ninety days went by and Peroba honored his word and finished the project. Of course, Tony had put on a lot of pressure to make sure it happened. This was a very high tech office. As a matter of fact, at this time I believed that in Brazil, similar offices would be hard to find. Tony spared no expense; he got the best available in the USA and brought it over. Even today this is still is one of the most high tech offices of Sao Paulo, right down to its custom detail. And to make sure everyone was aware of the new office he had a grand opening and invited all of his clients and suppliers. He displayed some of the high tech equipment like the video-conference room, the likes of which few had seen. He had a video-conference with the Miami office at the opening which, amused everyone.

And business was still growing every day, hiring new salespeople, new offices in Vitoria, (state of Espirito Santo, Brazil), Itajai (state of Santa Catarina), Curitiba (state of Parana) and Arica (Chile) and of course new clients such as Komatsu, Nestle, Mazda and Visteon, among others.

About this time Tony had heard from Davie Palumbo about a social project of his. It was an orphanage in Sao Paulo maintained by his corporation. The orphanage was a brilliant idea, Tony thought when he heard this from Davie so he set up a goal to do the same thing Davie had done. Already, every year it had been his pleasure to dress as Santa Claus and give away toys to the kids of this poor neighborhood of Jaguariuna. Having his own orphanage would be a great idea.

Later he met a lady in Jaguariuna, Kate Garden, who managed her own orphanage in the town; Tony liked her very much and decided to adopt the orphanage, just like Davie Palumbo had done in Sao Paulo.

Kate Garden: Her nephew was married to Tony's cousin; she came from a wealthy family from Guaira, SP and had dedicated her whole life to helping children in Jaguariuna. She had sold everything she owned to build the orphanage in Jaguariuna. Tony was very impressed with this attitude and tried to make all her dreams come true.

Tony also acquired a real estate commercial building in Miami for Exbrus's office. He paid cash for it (five hundred thousand dollars); finance would not make part of his vocabulary. He also acquired a residential real estate in Coral Gables, at one of the best condominiums in town for one and half million dollars, also paid by cash. And he decided to tear the house down and rebuild it.

Marcos Paz was hired as an International Director to work at the Miami office. Tony was very impressed with his work during at the Hanover Logistics Fair in Hanover, Germany, where Exbrus was an exhibitor. Marcos was a good fellow and had a perfect synchronism with Tony.

Next big step: Tony decided to duplicate the concept he created in South America to other parts of the world. The concept he created, which until now had no name, was: to manage the entire logistics process, where Exbrus would purchase the goods, would handle all the transportation, pay for all duties at the destination country, and deliver it to the door of the ultimate client. And the client would only pay after receiving all goods! This was paradigm; no one ever had done it before. (It puts one in mind of the Star Trek slogan: Where no man has gone before). It was the best of the two worlds, on one hand the supplier would gets his money in advance, or a guarantee of it and the exporter would only pay when the goods were in his hands. And on top of that Exbrus would give a fixed price and a fixed time of delivery for each project. It was unbelievable; people could not believe this process when they heard it for the first time!

Tony, since childhood, had been a visionary man, and really believed that Exbrus would grow some day to be a larger corporation such as FedEx, UPS or DHL. He hired a consulting company to do its first business plan; the idea was to bring in venture capital to Exbrus Corporation. Tony believed that he needed one hundred million dollars to do the Exbrus expansion. He envisioned potential sales of a billion dollars annually! That's what you heard! I believe that Tony went too far. Nobody could see it yet. It was too much money, but Tony never thought this was a crazy idea, because he knew exactly how to do it. And here he goes again!

To understand Tony and his objectives we have to go back ten years. When at the Tom Hopkins Seminar, he wrote down his ten-year goal-setting plan, and he had planned to have a net worth of 3.5 million dollars by this time. Now, try to imagine this: ten years ago when he wrote his goals, he was making about 30 thousand dollars a year, and now he had a net worth of 7 million dollars - that would be impossible for most of people to achieve, so his optimism was not out of thin air. His confidence made him aim high. And what's more, Tony wrote his next ten-year goal setting a net worth of a billion dollars by the year 2010; that's right! One billion dollars! In addition to providing jobs for over ten thousand people and being able to help at least one hundred thousand children a year, and after 2010 dedicated 100% of his time to social activities and to help people to achieve their dreams, among others things. This is Tony Lima!

Meanwhile, Sharon got better, went through plastic surgery, and seemed to be happy now. She made lots of friends and finally it seemed that she had acclimated her self to the USA. She got pregnant again and Tony is very happy.

By now Richard was feeling better, and accepted an invitation from his Uncle Frederico and Bryan to establish a delivery business in Brasilia. Tony was happy because Uncle would have a good influence on Richard.

At one of the condominium get togethers, Tony and Sharon met his new neighbor and his wife, Pierre LaCosta and they became good friends.

Pierre LaCosta: He had worked in several banks in Brazil and the USA; he is now building a new house estimated at over ten million dollars. He is well experienced in loans, venture capital and the finance world.

One thing again led to the next and Tony shared his business plans with Pierre, who promptly offered to help. Pierre called a few friends and set up few appointments.

With business plans ready they went to the meeting. Everyone seemed to like the project, but two things would bring their attention: one was that the financial statements were not accurate and Exbrus had a lot of experience in Brazil, but was unproven in other countries. The financial statements were not provided by Blacker, who had all kinds of excuses for not having it done accordingly.

What Tony did not know was that Blacker had set up his own operation in Brazil and was taking money out of the corporation, and of course this idea of bringing someone new to the company, was a really bad idea for him, because with *"due diligence"* they probably would find out. And that's why he would change the numbers of the financial records, and Tony had little experience or knowledge of the financial end of the corporation.

After three meetings with different prospects, and after hearing the same comments, Tony decided to start the international operation alone, and later he would search for investors.

Them he opened Hong Kong, Chile, Mexico and also authorized Blacker to acquire the license of a bonded warehouse at the port of Arica, Chile.

Tony discovered Hong Kong and loved this city; there he felt alive, and there in some inexplicable way he was re-energized.

Tony brought Sharon, who was pregnant, to Hong Kong. During the flight Sharon got panicky and very sick. When they arrived in Hong Kong she couldn't sleep, she would cry and vomit, so Tony called a doctor and she went to the local hospital where she ended up staying for three days. Nothing seemed to make her better. So Tony resumed the trip and brought her back to Miami and again on the flight back she had the same thing. After that episode Sharon would be very scared to fly again. She required a sedative during each flight.

Sandra Lima, Tony's sister, after having a baby girl, got divorced and moved from Los Angeles to Sao Paulo. She went home to live with her parents and started to work at the Exbrus office in Sao Paulo.

July, 2001. Tatiane Lima was born – second daughter of Tony and Sharon. Again Tony was thrilled with the new baby!

Uncle Frederico and his son Bryan decided to move from Brasilia to the city of Uberaba, state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, where they were going to establish a hotel resort. They wanted to sell the courier business, which they started, to Richard in Brasilia, so Tony talked his uncle into selling to Richard at whatever price he could afford and he would pay the difference of the total investment. Richard was not to know about any of this guaranteed payment. Tony wanted to make Richard feel capable and keep the business for himself.

The relationship with Sharon was going very bad, again. Sharon was depressed and after several disagreements with Tony started to lose control.

CHAPTER TEN

THE NEW HOME

"In anger we should refrain both
from speech and action"

Pythagoras

November, 2001. Tony and Sharon moved to the new home, the renovations almost finished. Finally Tony had his dream house! He was very happy. Having seen to every detail nothing was done without his approval, and nothing was left behind. His intention was to rebuild the house, move in and then put the house on the market for sale with a profit. Since the real estate market was going up, and as usual he wanted to make the best of both worlds, not only would he be living in a fantastic home, he also was able to sell it, make a profit, and perhaps buy another house, even better. That was Tony's way!

He used to sit on his deck at sunset and gaze out at the sunset over the canal and think of his *"family"* and everyone who had helped to make that dream come true. He really wanted to share all this with everyone, but his *"family"* was the most important of all.

The next step was to bring his family and Sharon family to see his accomplishment. He invited everyone to come for Christmas and New Year's celebration, and his invitation was to come with no expenses, he would pay everything for everyone! And sharing this with his family was very important; these things had no value to him, unless he would share it with them.

Somehow Sharon did not agree with that; she did not want to bring anyone, not her family or Tony's. She would make excuses that the home was not ready yet, and she hated the competition between Tony's mother and sister, who always wanted to have the same things she did. But Tony would do it his way, whether Sharon liked it or not. And if she wanted to bring her family, it would be OK with him.

Tony, by this time, felt on top of the world; he had acquired just about everything that money could buy. Not only did he have a home valued at three and half million, with zero mortgages, he also owned other real estate in values exceeding three million dollars. He had all the fancy watches, the fancy cars, such as the Mercedes S-500, the Ferrari F360 Spider, the motorcycle, BMW RS1200 and anything that he ever wanted. You name he had it!

Everything was set. He got the tickets, set the dates and he was anxious to see his parents, brother and sister. One day before they came, December 23, Richard said that

he lost his passport, and couldn't find it. So his parents canceled the trip at the last minute. Tony was very upset and furious with this brother; how you could lose such an important document, he said over the phone.

Sandra arrived with her daughter Sabrina and on the following day Richard found his passport but decided to delay his trip two days and so his parents flew on Christmas evening. Tony was so disappointed thinking that he had planned everything to celebrate Christmas and his parents and his brother weren't coming.

Finally everyone arrived, and as usual discussions between Sharon, Sandra and his mother turned into tension and jealousy filled sessions. Tony would get sad seeing this. He talked a lot with Richard and that seemed to be OK; he was happy and constantly complimented Tony for having all his dreams to come true.

Tony had planned to travel to Hong Kong after the holidays, and would bring his father with him; he also wanted to bring his mother, but she recently had a knee chirurgic operation and could not walk well. Tony wanted to show his dad his office in Hong Kong and he hoped to travel to China as well. Tony would love to share all his conquests with his father; he would feel proud, and I guess he always wanted to be approved by his parents. Every child does.

A small event that turned in to a major event: After the holidays Mrs. Lima had to get some documents done, and Sandra woke up early in the morning to take her mother to the offices; she took one of Tony's cars without telling him.

Tony had some documents in the car that he needed that day, and got furious (as usual) when he found out that Sandra took his car without telling him. He had no problem with her taking the car; he wasn't crazy about cars, and he would never refuse to lend a car to somebody, but the usual brother sister cat-fight ensued. But in this situation with his sister Tony was also mad at some construction workers who were supposed to have finished their work some time ago, but still had not so that evening when Sandra got back Tony shouted at her at the top of his lungs, *"The next time you take my fucking car, tell me!"*

What Tony didn't know, was that it had been his mother who had asked to get the car and Mrs. Lima took the matter personally now, and instead of telling both them to shut up, she took Sandra's side and things got really hot! Sandra decided to get out of the house and go to a hotel. Richard would try to calm things down, and asked Sandra, *"Why are you going to do that? In the end Tony will get the bill anyway, why don't you stay? At least it does not cost more here."*

Everything in life depends on perspective, and how you look at things, and I guess that's why we get so confused at times. Can you try to imagine the different feelings for each person after those events?

So, Tony saw his world falling apart! All he wanted was to share his success with his family, and everything was going wrong. And now Mr. Lima, after being pushed by Mrs. Lima decided not to go with Tony to Hong Kong. When Mr. Lima told him, that was it. They managed to get Tony at his highest degree of madness. I mean this guy was angry. So he walked to the front door, opened it, and slammed the door as hard as he could, breaking it, and walked out.

The next day Richard returned to Brazil and Tony drove him to the airport accompanied by everybody except Sandra who was staying at the hotel.

At the airport Richard went to the restroom and Tony followed him. Tony looked at his brother who was coughing constantly, and he thought, I won't have a brother for very long. (It seems like he was predicting the future)

While they were on their way home from the airport, Mrs. Limas started to scream at Tony and started hitting him. Tony just couldn't understand what he had done wrong!

Next day his parents, Sandra and her daughter returned to Brazil and Tony flew to Hong Kong alone.

When Tony arrived in Hong Kong, he learned that Richard had a major car accident in Brazil, broke three ribs, but he was OK, and his parents were with him.

Tony was very upset with all the things going wrong with his family; that was a very big disappointment, so he re-thought his whole life and from then on his family now would consist of Sharon and the kids. He also decided to no longer stay with his parents when in Sao Paulo, and would get his own place.

In his business life he was not happy with the finance control of Exbrus, so he decided to make a proposal to Robert Johnson (Sandra's ex-husband) to come and work with him as Controller.

Robert Johnson – American Born, was previously married to Sandra, and Tony had always had liked him very much; he had worked in several aerospace companies. One thing they had in common was that Robert was a sky-diver and he had introduced Tony to the sport, and now Tony loved it.

After the holiday experience, Tony offered a job to Sandra at the parts division at LineFor, but she rejected it and preferred to stay home doing nothing. She hated Tony now, because she learned that Tony hired her ex-husband she was through; this was revenge, even though Tony's intention was far from that. He just wanted someone he could trust to deal with the finances.

Of course Blacker hated the idea of hiring Johnson as Controller; he would say to Tony, *"You are bringing family members to the company again. When are you going to learn?"* He was very upset with it, but Tony, stubborn as hell, did not mind his opinion.

Coming back from Hong Kong Tony had planned to go with Sharon to Europe for vacation but flying with Sharon was a challenge now.

Tony always wanted to learn about telepathy but always was afraid of it somehow; he was afraid of the power it could give you. He always was able to send messages using telepathy, always having experiences of synchronism with people close to him. So, at the airport book-store he looked for a book on this subject, but could not find one. He decided to purchase the book *"Sixth Sense"* by Stuart Wilde.

Reading it was a revelation. The words made so much sense for him. Suddenly he did not feel like the only crazy guy on this planet, someone else had already shared his own feelings. Glued to the book, he wanted to know everything now.

This trip now was very different to him; he was now very much aware of what was happening around him, and he started to understand the importance of being here and now.

They rented a car in Paris and drove to Milan, Italy. Sharon was taking anti-depression medicines and while driving through the Swiss Alps, Sharon asked him, since they were having such a good time, if he thought that she should stop to take the medicine. Tony said yes.

In Geneva, while having dinner, Sharon got this crisis, and she started to scream aloud in the restaurant, that she wanted to go home. So she took some more medicine. For the next four hours Tony had a very hard time. Try to imagine this: to the people around the restaurant, it must have looked as though Tony had high jacked Sharon!

They managed to finish the trip with visits to Milan, Monaco, Cannes, Saint Tropez and back to Paris.

Tony kept reading books related to spiritual subjects. He started to meditate and went for a walk in the morning, most days.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

DEATH, PARTIES & ENVY

"Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace!
Where there is hatred let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy"

Saint Francis of Assisi

The next step now was to prepare the opening party for the new home. Tony's intention was to share it with all the people that had helped him to make this dream come true. But he was very upset with his family by now, and they would not be a part of it. He included Blacker, Marcos Paz, Robert Johnson, Bernard Silva, Carlos Costa, Rudy Benson from LineFor, the Coca-Cola buyer Manny Green, Bill Fisher, and Davie Palumbo among many others.

Since he was now living in this very fancy neighborhood where very important and wealthy people resided, he also decided to invite all the neighbors as well, as his intention was to attract investors to move Exbrus to the next step. If he could show what he had accomplished at his home people would have an idea of what he could do on the business side.

Remember the promises he made to Sharon, about the necklace he promised to give her? Well, this was the perfect time so he went out to shop at all the stores of Cartier worldwide. He bargained with those guys, and got the best price in Hong Kong. We are talking about seven figures here!

Everything was set! The invitations were sent, and the party would be on March 09, 2002. Tony planned to commemorate Sharon's birthday as well and the gift he had promised would be her surprise.

March 03, 2002 – Tony was taking a shower with his two daughters and was having lots of fun with them, when Sharon told him that Sandra (his sister) was on the phone and wanted to speak with him. He did not pay much attention to the call, as he did not want to talk to her anyway.

Fifteen minutes later the phone rang again, and this time it was his father crying on the phone. He answered the phone and his father delivered some terrible news:

"Your brother just passed away! We don't know exactly what happened, but it seems that he had a heart attack; he had mixture drugs, medicine and alcohol."

Tony could not believe what he just heard, and his pain was extreme!! For him it was like losing a son! Yes, it was his brother but for him he was like a son and lot of thoughts flew thru his mind: Why had this happened? Why had they left him alone? It seemed that he was responsible for his death.

But he had to be strong, so he held in all of his emotions and pain, and went to Jaguariuna for the funeral with Sharon. He could not touch Richard's body; it was like that never happened in his mind. He did not want to believe any of this. At night he got into a big fight with his sister, and then life goes on.

The lady from the orphanage, Mrs. Kate, had asked Tony to build two new classrooms. Despite this whole mess that had beset him, Tony decided to dedicate himself to the social work, perhaps that would take away some of the pain that was gnawing at the inside of him. So he decided not only to give two new classrooms to Kate, but to tear down the old orphanage and built a new one! Again Tony's way and it had to be big as usual. He resolved to build the orphanage and to have the grand opening coincide with the local cowboy rodeo show, (festa do peao) the most famous in Brazil, so he could bring clients who always had asked him to take them to the show, and at the same time he could share his accomplishments with them. After all, his clients had been part of this as well. And the idea was, just like Davie Palumbo had sold him the idea of an orphanage, maybe he could do the same to others. Again he hired the architect Peroba, and told him he must make this happen. It needed to be done in 90 days!

Tony changed the date of the inauguration party of his home and reverted to his original plans. He hired Sergio Nakamura to remake his wedding DVD, so at the time he was saying to Sharon that she would be the mother of his children, he would put the pictures of their three children, with a special message to Sharon. Again, Tony's ideas…

Sergio Nakamura: This guy was hired by Tony to make the video presentation for Exbrus. He was a perfectionist when it came to his job, and Tony soon got to know him well. He used to work with the Brazilian government with social work, and he had been very disappointed with his experiences. So they shared a common interest in social work, and both were enthusiastic about it.

May 25, 2002 – It was one of those days of perfect weather for Miami. The inauguration of his home was very important to Tony, so he was sure to perfect every detail. He wanted to make the best party ever at that location. One of his ideas was instead of having waiters, he decided to hires top models to be waitresses at the party. He had no eyes for them, as he always looked at women like flowers: they make places most beautiful. Of course, Sharon did not approve it and when she saw the models, she got very mad, and again had one of her crises. She had no idea about the surprise that Tony had prepared for her.

As you walk to the impressive house, there was valet parking, and the top models as hostesses, with special clothes for the event, it would impress even Bill Gates! The

grand piano, by the touch of a computer, was playing soft music that would make you feel like you were walking to heaven.

Sharon, dressed in a beautiful red long dress by Valentino, was together with Tony as they welcomed the guests and gave them a tour around the perfect house. Tony really took care of every single detail from the big screen to the red rose petals on the bathtub.

Around 10:00 P.M. he called for everyone's attention and said:

My life had changed nine years ago! You know! (Everyone smiles)
That was when I met this lady in front of me (as he points to Sharon)
She made the difference!
When I looked in to her eyes, in that moment I knew she would be my princess! (Whistles and claps)
One of the things I want to celebrate with everyone here. You know in our society there are all these codes to celebrate your 25 or 50 years anniversary.
Anyway, I don't know why we have to wait all this time.
We have been married for seven years! And it has been the most beautiful years of my life.
She has given me everything I always wished for and has been present in most of my successes.
So, I decided to share with everyone here this moment! I did a little thing for her! I recorded a DVD for her and I would like to ask everyone's attention while I play it. I would ask you to pay attention to the little details, there is nothing new, just some details that have been added and for sure she (Sharon) will notice it!

The DVD presentation then began with images of flowers and the following message:

Sharon, on this very special day I would like to share with you, the emotional moments that now are part of our lives! Tony
Tony and Sharon: the beginning of a new happiness phase…

As the DVD presentation goes on, there were images of the wedding day repeating his words:

Well, Sharon, it finally happened!
I told you when I first met you that I would make you the happiest woman on this planet
I told you that that I would make you my princess!
Well! You are my queen today!
I am not here only to sign a document. The document I have in mind is much more you and me!
I want to be very happy by your side; I want always to be at your side at all moments. Be it sad or happy moments.
I will always love you! You will be the mother of my kids! (At this moment it showed the pictures of their three children and Sharon became very emotional and started to cry)

And the video continues…

You will be everything I ever dreamed in my life.
All this is a dream come true to me, and it's the most beautiful dream of my life.
Thanks for always being at my side!
I love you so much!

Sharon replies:

I am very touched and don't know what to say, but without a doubt, today I am a very happy woman!
I love you!

As the DVD presentation ended it showed a video of a white dove flying with the following message:

Sharon: Thanks for existing, Tony!

Tony then continued his speech:

Some time ago I had made a promise to Sharon, to give her a special gift and I would like to share this moment as well.

So, Tony gave Sharon the necklace and the earring rings package in this beautiful red Cartier box. And everyone clapped and cried with emotion. Sharon was touched so deeply that she could not remove the necklace she was wearing to replace it.

After that Tony showed a video presentation about the project of the Jaguariuna orphanage. No need to say that this celebration stuck in everyone's memory. They would never forget it. It was the best and of course the **ENVY** was there with at its fullest power!

The celebration at his home was a success and the construction of the orphanage was proceeding at a very fast pace. Tony got very busy with all those projects and left Exbrus in the hands of Mr. Blacker and of course he took plenty advantage of that. It was over billing for the construction of the orphanage, expenses that never existed, personal expenses, settlements with authorities of all kinds, etc.

Remember uncle Frederico? Well, he started this new business, he was going to build a country hotel inland of the state of Minas Gerais, but he found hot water (when you drill a hole to get fresh water and the water floated at 100 Fahrenheit, very rare) during the construction, and decided to turn it into Team Park Hotel Resort. Right about that time he ran out of money and it was Tony who helped him, loaning him the money - three hundred thousand dollars - and became part of his business. Tony was very glad to be able to help his favorite uncle who always supported him throughout his life, and of course Mr. Blacker hated that!

Sharon became depressed again. She felt that Tony used her on the home celebration party, and instead of liking all the things he had done for her, she believed that he used her in the name of the business. And Tony became very frustrated with her, in his mind he had done everything with the best of intentions, and his idea was to share this with everyone. That was not for sale, and the only thing he would think about the business was the renovation and the details of the house. That was not for sale; he truly loved Sharon and wanted to share with her of all his accomplishments,

especially now that her and his kids were the only people he would consider as family. He also thought that maybe this would help her to overcome her depression, not to make it worse. So again Tony was feeling alone!

July, 2002 - As Sharon continued her treatment with the psychologist, at one of the sessions with Tony by himself he told the shrink:

"I give up, doctor; I will keep my marriage with Sharon just like most relationships I know, on a fake basis. I just pretend that everything is normal. I give up, Sharon, I did everything possible to make it work, but nothing did. So I give up!"

So Tony decided to dedicate himself full time to the construction of the orphanage and the event to be held in Jaguariuna. He invited all of his clients and suppliers to be part of it. He brought employees from Hong Kong, Miami and even a supplier from Hong Kong to attend the event.

Once more architect Peroba did his work on time, and he was able to finalize the construction under 90 days, another record for Exbrus! The building was able to hold 500 children, it was big, and Tony again took care of every single detail.

His friend Gary Nobel lent him his ranch to host the guests and to hold a private party. By this time Gary had built this brand new ranch that had every kind of facility you could imagine. It looked more like a five star hotel. They really became good friends after Gary made his promise to meet Tony in the USA, and Tony had helped him to get established in Los Angeles, and later on Gary started his own business exporting animal goods to Asia, and then returned to Brazil. He had helped Tony before and they had done some business transactions on a trust basis. They really trust each other.

August 24, 2002 – As usual everything was perfect! Nothing was missing, Tony hired private country shows, helicopter rides, beautiful top models, personal massage, a beauty parlor, horses, and nothing was missing. This was the festival inside of the festival.

The two day festival would begin on a Saturday morning, where the guest would participate at the grand opening of the orphanage; in the afternoon they would enjoy the party specially prepared at Gary's Ranch and in the evening they would go to the Rodeo show where Exbrus would have a special exclusive private room to watch the show.

The following is Tony's speech at the grand opening of the Jaguariuna Orphanage:

Before I begin, I would like to make some notes:

I have been away from Jaguariuna for over 25 years (22 only in the USA) and even so, I have not lost this hillbilly accent, and as a good country boy and a good hillbilly (as I grew up on a Jaguariuna farm) I still commit many mistakes. Please forgive me for my humble speech faults.

Does anybody here believe in coincidences?

For those who answer YES I have a surprise for you.

There are no coincidences.

Everything in life has a meaning for each of us.

And it is on us to find the true motive.

Take a break and think of everything that happens in your life.

Everything has a meaning and we often we ignore them!

The message I am bringing for you today will touch each of you in a different way. And that is not a coincidence.

Why are you here today?

What is the reason why you have been chosen?

I want to ask you all to hold each other's hands and pray, asking our father, that this fabulous moment that we are all living last forever:

"Our Father …"

I thank God and everyone that is on my side.

I thank this force that always has been with me, my family and the Exbrus Team (where everything is FAST): Miami (Robert Johnson), Hong Kong (Gao Tang), Brazil (Blacker, Marcos Paz, Bernard Silva, Carlos Costa, our clients, our suppliers, and so many others that are all part of this project,

My Uncle Frederico (who always believed in me),

Architect Peroba, and his team that made this project into reality in 90 days (believe it or not!)

Thanks to Davie Palumbo, Dario Calabrese and James Jacob for having planted this seed: this is the first one. Many others will come!

Thanks, Joe & Nancy O'Connell, for coming all the way from Hong Kong. Do you believe in coincidences? It is a Small world.

In addition, it is clear; nothing would turn into reality if not for Kate Garden and her team, for all her charisma and dedication of a lifetime to the children of Jaguariuna:

It is my deepest wish that this place stay illuminated as it is now!

And that we can show to these children that there is a better future,

Today is a very special day for me. Not only for the inauguration of the Jaguariuna Orphanage, but also it is the first step of the Exbrus Foundation, a non-for-profit organization dedicated to Children and the environment. Through the Exbrus Foundation, we will keep this flame alive, so that more initiatives like this one will come true. And I invite you all to be part of this Project.

When a corporation focuses its efforts in improving the world through concrete actions in the benefit of the community, it is not a simple corporation any more…

When the employees of a corporation add their efforts through participative and solidarity practices, they are not simple employees any more…

Corporation and employees together form a large family, to serve the community!

The other day I was in Hong Kong watching CNN news during the visit of Pope John Paul II to Canada, and the reporter asked him: "In a world of so much violence, 9/11, middle east wars, terrorism, among others, does the Pope believe that we are close to the apocalypse, to the end of this world?"

And his answer was:

"No, the Pope does not believe so! The forces of evil have actually grown stronger, and we need more and more people on the good side to change the Planet! We need each person, each day, to fight the good cause and defeat the forces of evil!"

Now I ask you all:

What have you done to today to make our Planet better?

What good action have you done today?

How many people have you sincerely helped? With words, attitudes, donations, whatever…?

Think about it and let us change this world into a better place to live in with small actions.

I heard this phrase once: "Be careful, very careful! About anything you sincerely desire with faith and belief! Be careful! You might get it!"

This is the message I want to leave with you today and its power.

You can believe on it!

All we have to do is to believe and to have faith!

And God, the Universe, and all the divine forces will help you get whatever you desire (and I mean literally!).

I always said that my life is like a movie, one of those movies that we do not want to end,

And the great secret is to have faith and to believe!

To dream, to imagine, to be creative,

To live each and every moment, like it was the last day!

And, certainly, to work hard as well.

This is my wish to all of you:

Come and join this wonderful world

All you need is to have faith and to believe!!

Thank you all for being here this morning.

This day there was such energy in the air… it's hard to describe it. Everyone felt it and got very emotional as well.

The following is one of those events I have already written a certain amount about: During the festival Tony hired six top models to host the event, as he always believed that flowers and women would make the place most beautiful. One of the girls, Anna Paola, somehow got Tony's attention, but nothing serious; after all, Tony had made up his mind by now and the last thing he wanted was to get into other relationships, he was determined to keep his marriage and at the most he would have maybe affairs on the side. So he made a joke with her saying: *"I would like to bring you to Hong Kong with me, would you like to come?"* She smiled not believing in a word of what he was saying.

Anna Paola Fanelli: She was Brazilian, 23 years old, Italian descent, beautiful body, blonde hair, green eyed, tall, and very feminine; she was the kind of a woman who when she walks into a place, for sure, everyone would notice.

Meanwhile, Blacker reported that the company was not doing well, that orders were decreasing because of the currency exchange getting higher. It made sense because this was around election time and Lula (socialist presidential candidate) was getting ahead. The exchange of the dollar went sky high, but nothing that would affect the corporation, as most of the clients were multinational customers, and would not be prejudiced by this.

Blacker had setup his plans very well. He would tell most people at Exbrus that Tony was going crazy and he had expended all the company money on social projects and the company could not support this anymore - of course, without Tony knowing about it. Blacker started to say to others in the company that Exbrus was an excellent company and the only thing wrong with it was Tony!

Soon after Blacker reported that the company was not getting any more new orders. Tony instead of looking after the company, decided to put his own money into the corporation. For Tony it would be easy, as he did not have enough motivation to

see what really was going on. So Tony replaced all the money expended on the construction of the orphanage with his personal funds.

CHAPTER TWELVE

IT IS LOVE AGAIN!

"Gravity is not responsible
for people falling in love"

Albert Einstein

September, 2002 – Tony called Anna Paola and told her that he had a proposal to her; she was working at a local event in Sao Paulo and agreed to meet him later at night after her work. Tony already had decided to bring her with him on his next trip to Hong Kong, and here we have the *"Casanova"* again. He bought her a dress and a pair of shoes (he already knew all her sizes from the event in Jaguariuna) and sent it to her. That's one of the things that I believe makes women love Tony: his good taste to shop; he really knows how to make women feel sensual. It's unbelievable!

Later on that day he met Anna Paola at this Japanese restaurant, and she really had no idea what Tony was about to propose her. She was thinking that was about another job and future events. And Tony said:

"I would like to invite you to come with me on my next trip to Hong Kong. You know my status, I am married and I do not intend to separate and I am happy like this. What I would like to propose to you is two weeks of fun, beginning, middle and an end. After that we can be at the most friends. While you are with me I will make you to feel like a princess, like was never done before. So, do you accept it?"

Anna Paola felt very uncomfortable with the proposal, as she felt she was being bought, like you buy a gift at the store, but very politely she thanked him and told him that she will think it over.

The following day she called Tony and thanked him and told him that she had no interest in going on the trip. But as we know by now, saying *"no"* to Tony is not quite easy because when he wants something and has the desire, *"no"* is not acceptable!

So, he persisted until he persuaded her to come. Everything was set, he bought her a plane ticket, sent it to her, and since he was in Miami, they planned to meet in Paris, and from there they would join together in Hong Kong.

About this time Tony sent Robert Johnson to Brazil to understand the financial software recently installed, and Blacker manipulated Robert all the way. Robert came back to Miami later on, thinking that they were selling the goods in Brazil under FOB (value of the goods at the port); in other words, Blacker made Robert believe that

Exbrus was buying for 100, paying all transportation costs, all taxes and duties (another 100%) and selling it for 80. That was so unbelievable that when Tony heard this from Robert, he had no idea of anything. Is this Blacker guy good or what?

In addition to that Robert also reported that Blacker was placing payments directly to suppliers from Chile. Tony asks Blacker what is going on. Those payments were supposed to be done from Miami, why was it done from Chile? And Blacker replied that there were some urgent payments that had to be done right away, and some other absurd excuses, and started to cry saying that he was hurt because Tony did not trust him, and Tony said that this had nothing to do about trust, and he only wanted to know what was going on. I believe that on this day Blacker thought Tony had discovered his imposture (Frauds). But Tony was so blind and could see nothing! He never for a minute suspected that Blacker was taking money away!

Few days before the trip to Hong Kong, in the Miami office Tony received a call from Anna Paola's father's telling him: I want to thank you for the opportunity you have offered my daughter but she has decided no to go! When Tony heard that, he froze! *Man, that was the last thing I wanted, getting myself in a mess again. Why her father is calling me? Why did she not call me?* He thought.

Once more Tony's determination goes on. He called a girl friend in Sao Paulo who had also met Anna Paola and she talked to her and finally after telling all the good things about Tony, and that he would never push her to do anything, that she was not willing to do, she agreed to come! And Tony called that *"YES I got it!"*

You need to understand Tony's mind about this time. He had read several books about spirituality by now, and learned that there is no coincidence, that when you desire something the universe conspires to help you, that there is no wrong or right, that everything is a learning experience and many other things as well. In addition to that, on his last trip to Hong Kong alone, before he met Anna Paola, he had had a perfect synchronized day in Bangkok and found a Thai old lady at this shopping mall, and while reading his palm told Tony that a new love would come into his life. At the time he had not idea about what she was talking about it. Now, all of a sudden it all started to make sense!

October, 2002 - Saturday – Tony flew to Paris and everything seemed to get in to this perfect symphony. He met Anna Paola at the airport in Paris. He had planned nothing, Tony knew by now that if you just let it flow, everything will get in place, in a perfect synchronism. It was like that since he gets on the plane in Miami beginning with the movie that was played until the end, as follows…

Tony found a small hotel in Paris and told the front desk clerk that they wanted to have dinner at the Eiffel Tower. The clerk said: *"Impossible, you must make a reservation at least 90 days prior!"* But he says that to the wrong guy. Tony started to phone several places until he found a guy who said, *"OK, I will pick you up at 8:00 P.M. sharp."* They got ready and as promised the guy arrived on time, picked them up and stop at another hotel and got an Italian couple as well. When they arrived at the Eiffel Tower, the guy told them to wait and went to talk to a doorman; from a distance you could not tell what they were talking about, but it was obvious that they were arguing with each other. After a few minutes he came back and said everything was OK, and since the package included the dinner Tony asked how much he had to pay, but he replied: *"You pay me when you come back, I will be waiting for you at 10:00 P.M. on your return."* Tony said OK, and they got up to the restaurant. When they

arrived the hostess told them, *"I have no idea what this guy has done, but I will get a table for you."* They sat at this perfect table, with an incredible view of Paris in the autumn; the food was fantastic followed with a dessert. They were really having a good time, there was such synchronism in the air – it's hard to describe it. When they left of the restaurant, they looked for the guy and he was not there. Tony said to Anna Paola: *"This is amazing, they guy brings us here, seems like we have no reservation, we don't pay anything! This is not normal!"* So they walked to the square in front, to get a taxi and Paris was crazy this night! There were lots of people in the streets, and taxis were hard to get but finally they managed to get one, and Tony wanted to see the *"Lido Paris Show."* The taxi driver, this Portuguese guy, told Tony that tonight is *"nuit blanche"* the white night, promoted by the mayor of Paris to increase business, where most of museums and business would be open, and all buses and subways were free, so he said, *"You're in luck to find someone to drive to that part of the city, because of the traffic, but I will take you there."* Tony smiled at Anna Paola. *"You see, everything is conspiring together for us!"*

When they got to *"Lido"* they faced this long line, Tony tried unsuccessfully to get someone to buy the tickets for them. So they waited and when a French host greeted them Tony asked him: *"Could you please get us a table at the center?"* The French guy replied with cynicism: *"You would like a table in the center?"* Tony said yes and he took them to the best possible table right in the middle of the theater! So again Tony looked at Anna Paola and said, *"You see it!"*

After the show they went to few dance clubs, and on the way back they could not get a taxi, so they took the first bus that came, and by an amazing coincidence the bus drove right to the front of their hotel. They got out at the next stop. It was about 5:00A.M. and they decided to grab something to eat at this coffee shop. They sat next to a French couple that later on sent two glasses of sweet liqueur to their table and said to them: "*You are the most loving couple we ever saw, so please celebrate the love!"* Anna Paola and Tony did not understand what was happening!

The world had stopped for them!

They got to the hotel very tired after this long and wonderful night, and they had to take a plane that afternoon. Anna Paola gave Tony a goodnight kiss and they slept in separate beds.

While waiting at the airport Tony made a reservation at the Peninsula Hotel in Hong Kong (one of the best hotels in that city), but of course Anna Paola had no idea of anything. She later asked him, how is the hotel in Hong Kong and Tony replied that is not as good as the hotel in Paris. Now this is Tony's special talent: he wants to see happiness through the eyes of the people he loves. And naturally Anna Paola is in this category!

When they arrived in Hong Kong early in the morning, the hotel sent a Rolls Royce Limousine to pick them up. Anna Paola had no idea what a limousine was; much less what was Rolls Royce! Hong Kong is Tony's favorite city now. This is the place he renews his energies and releases all his stress. Tony knows Hong Kong like it was his hometown.

As they entered the hotel and walked into this beautiful hall, with ornate English style decoration, it really made them feel good to be there. Anna Paola started to cry and asked Tony: *"Why are you doing this to me?"*

"Because I promised to make you the happiest person for the next two weeks," replied Tony.

At the check-in counter, out of the blue, the hotel clerk decided to upgrade their room. It was already a bay view suite with a beautiful view of the island of Hong Kong, but now they provided a bigger suite, even better!

Anna Paola could not believe or understand what was going on. She never had seen anything like it in her life, and would continue to cry. Tony hugged her and calmed her down.

Tony went to the Exbrus office, and on his way he sent her a beautiful red roses bouquet, and asked room service to provide a bottle of champagne with strawberries on his return.

By now Tony had the taste of victory on his mind! *Yes I got it! I will get late tonight!* He thought. When he returned Anna Paola was still sleeping, and it was almost night. The view of Hong Kong this time of the day is incredible; you must be there to see it! No pictures can describe it! Tony took a shower and was so happy. Mr. Casanova did again! It is amazing what a man can do for a woman. The desire for sex is one of the strongest forces on this planet. So after, he woke up Anna Paola, gave her a really nice kiss, and no time to lose, let's do the macho man job! Only to his surprise Anna Paola, got completely off and told him: *"No, no, no and no. I do not want to have sex with you! You told me that you would not do anything that I don't want to do it."* She insisted.

Tony got really mad! Rejection was not part of the plan! But he calmed down and took her out for dinner at this beautiful restaurant by the ocean. And, of course, he would never give up, and a few days went by and the same answer from her: *No, no, no and no!*

So one day Tony got really fuming and decided to send her back to Brazil, but since her ticket was a mileage award, he could not change the date for an early return. And they kept going on.

They say if you have lemons, why not make lemonade! So Tony kept planning new adventures. They went to Macau. Macau is the opposite of Hong Kong, although it is a casino city, it is a much more laid back type of town, a nice place to stay over a weekend and relax. They rented a motorcycle and rode all around the island. They had lunch at this famous Portuguese restaurant Fernando's (a must) and on the way back they visited several churches and Buddhist temples. Tony took lots of pictures of Anna Paola, who seemed to be the happiest woman on this earth! Always enjoying everything and with a big smile on her face. There was no dull moment with her; she really made Tony happy, with the exception of the *no, no, no and no*.

By this time they really got to know each other and even though they were really involved by now, Tony learned that he is the kind of guy Anna Paola always wanted to stay away from, married with no expectation of any future for her. Not to forget *no, no, no and no!*

Tony started to imagine all kinds of things and started to think that maybe she was looking for money, and he did not care (he thought); if that was the case he would pay for it. So, he made a scene to see if he could buy her by giving her a car (Mercedes Class A) a popular car in Brazil that she had told him that she liked very much - if she would agree, but again, to his surprise: *no, no, no and no.*

Another coincidence: Between one of the disagreements with Anna Paola in Macau, Tony went for a walk and met with a person whom he had met before. When they had last met, this fellow had been telling Tony that he had separated from his girlfriend and when he saw Tony now he said: *"How wonderful to see you here, I got back with my girlfriend and we are celebrating here!"*

To Tony those events were very important, he was much more aware of everything now. Everything had special meaning, things that a few years ago had no meaning at all. So that gave him additional strength to go on with Anna Paola, and every day: *no, no, no and no.*

With the exception you of know what, everything was perfect! The synchronism was everywhere! Everything followed in place, which is when the universe really conspires to make it right! They took a helicopter from Macau to Shenzhen (China) and stayed at this brand new hotel, Italian style. Tony made some business contacts and Anna Paola came with him to a few meetings.

They came back to Hong Kong and later they flew to Shanghai. Tony had a meeting with the president of the Port of Arica that was on a business mission at that city.

His favorite song *("My Way," by Frank Sinatra)* was playing everywhere, and it was beautiful what they felt for each other. On the way back they stopped over Bangkok, Thailand for a day and they lived another perfect day. They had dinner over the river with a full moon; there was nothing you could ask more! They had it all! But even with all those wonderful moments Anna Paola would persist in saying: *no, no, no and no!*

It is amazing how much time flies when you are in perfect synchronism. The two weeks had gone by so fast and now they were returning back. As they flew back to Frankfurt, they took different routes, Anna Paola returned to Sao Paulo and Tony got back to Miami. At the airport Tony looked into Anna Paola's eyes and said:

"I am sorry you could not see what I saw, we could have enjoyed even more if you wanted, but I am happy anyway, I had a wonderful time with you and I will keep my promise. We have a beginning, middle and this is the end!"

Anna Paola replied:

"So, is this the end?"

And Tony confirmed it and both went back to their lives.

Tony still had to wait for his flight until the following morning. At the hotel he took all of her pictures and threw them away and said to himself, *"It is finished!"* And life went on.

Getting back to Miami he found that Blacker and his wife Valeria had come to Miami, with some excuses, and Sharon learned that they are looking to buy a house in the same condominium complex. Tony didn't understand what was going on, (is this guy a dummy or what?) so he asked Blacker: *"Do you want to purchase a house here?"*

"No, this is all an invention of Valeria, I just told her to do it so she doesn't get on my case," answered Blacker. Tony stopped for a minute and started to think that maybe Blacker wanted to get a house here as well. Tony loved Blacker like a brother.

As matter of fact, after Tony's brother passed way, he always would tell Blacker that he was his brother now, and Tony really wanted to do anything to please Blacker. Remember Tony's rule: to see happiness in the eyes of the people he loves.

Tony made a suggestion to Blacker. *"I know according to your reports the company still owes you money, and we need to get more money into the business, so we can continue business."* (Tony had believed in everything that Blacker would inform him, and by Blacker's notes, the company owed him over one hundred thousand dollars).

"Let's do this, since I will have to finance one of the old houses to get the money we need, why don't you get the title of the house, you can use money the company owes you as a down payment, and the mortgage payments will be covered by rental payments, as the house is leased at the moment. That way you have a house here and we can solve some of the debts of the corporation," said Tony.

And, of course, Blacker would accept it. That was how he manipulated the people around him, he would fake that he wanted nothing, and would leave the decision to the other person. So Tony did what he promised and paid all the bills for the corporation. What Tony did not know was by now Blacker had taken out of the business over two million dollars using the offshore corporation established in Chile.

Tony did not want to be part of the business; he only wanted to solve the problems and would leave everything in Blacker's hands.

Anna Paola called Tony now and said she wanted to talk to him and Tony replied: *"To say what?"* And Anna Paola, unsure of what she really wanted, did not say what Tony perhaps wanted to hear. So Tony told her: *"It is over, Anna Paola!"*

Marcos Paz suggested that Tony participate at this conference in London called *"Trade Finance*", where all international banks were, exactly the type of partner that Exbrus needed would be there and since Tony wanted to stay away from home and the business, he decided to go to the conference in London.

Try to understand Tony's feelings by now. He first lost his love for his parents and sister, later on he lost his brother, business was falling apart and after he realized that he lost Sharon as well. The only thing that seemed to be OK was Anna Paola, but she was afraid.

On his trip to London he realized that he was in love with Anna Paola, and it was this feeling almost uncontrollable! He went to the conference, but could not hear a word of what they were saying; he was so connected with Anna Paola. It seemed like that they were attached together.

He received an e-mail from Anna Paola his first evening in London. Anna Paola sent this long message saying that he had not given her a chance and she was heartbroken because of it. So Tony took a day before he answer and told her that she should forget him, he was not the person she wanted, and for sure she had no trouble in finding many potentials boyfriends. The truth was that Tony wanted to see her as much as she wanted to see him. But he wanted to make sure that she would step up and make up her mind. He could not go on with this in her way! It had to be yes, yes, yes and yes!

Anna Paola was so in love with Tony, and now she started to understand what was going on. As she read the e-mail from Tony, she was working at an event in Florianopolis, Santa Catarina, all of a sudden they start to play *"My Way"* and now

she had no doubt she must see him again! And she wrote back to Tony: *"I want to see you!"*

After London, Tony came to Brazil, and boy I tell you, he saw his world in flames, he had no idea how to handle this situation. He had affairs before, but not a steady relationship - he could not manage two women at the same time! And all his prior relationships flashed in his mind! He went crazy thinking about everything, about Sharon, his children, etc. He also realized how much happier he was with Anna Paola and how bad was his faked marriage.

So, Anna Paola really seemed to be the door to happiness, but he did not want to mess it up. He remembered the experience of his relationship with Sophia. He did not want to go through the same thing, as their family expelled her out of their house. Could you imagine this happening again? No way, he thought. He wanted to cover all of his bases, and he wanted no trouble! He knew that, if he saw Anna Paola again, he would start a relationship with her.

So, when he arrived in Brazil, the first thing he did was to call Anna Paola's mother. During their trip Anna Paola had talked to him, and said that she had no secret with her parents, and they would have to know everything. Tony never believed that, so he wanted to make sure, her parents would be OK with their relationship. So her mother agreed to meet him, and as Anna Paola was in Florianopolis, he asked not to tell her about their meeting. To Tony's surprise her mother reaffirmed that she knew everything, and that it was Anna Paola's decision, and they (parents) would be behind any decision she wanted to take. And personally she really liked him from what Anna Paola had told her, and wanted to meet him as well. *"We will pray to God to seek the best for both of you,"* she says.

I believe that Tony did not expect this attitude from her mother; actually, he wanted to have hundreds of confirmations before he could go on with it. The fear of making a mistake was big. So, Tony called Anna Paola and they met again, but even now that she had decided to stay with Tony, she has this belief of seeing sex as a ritual, it only can happen if everything is perfect, and without this it is no, no, no and no. There were several disagreements until the magical day arrived!

Tony had taken her to dinner in this very fine restaurant in Sao Paulo with live music. They dined, had champagne, dance and finally, finally, Anna Paola agrees to make love to Tony. This was the magical moment! The Gods must have stopped to celebrate that wonderful night! Finally their love was at its fullest!

They went to see the *"Beauty and the Beast"* that was playing in Sao Paulo and Tony nicknamed Anna Paola after the main character of the play: Bella! And from this day on he would call her Bella.

Tony decided to divorce Sharon, his plan was to move to Hong Kong with Bella, and he had already set plans to live there, and now would be the perfect time.

Tony's concern now was Sharon and the children, he did not want to make any decision in Miami, because he knew that Sharon would never accept this, because she always believed that you marry once in your life time and stick with it, for good or bad. No way will she accept it.

Following Blacker's suggestions, Tony told Sharon they needed to move back to Jaguariuna, to reduce costs. Sharon up to this time hated Miami. All of a sudden, now that she has to leave, she loved Miami and did not want to go back to Jaguariuna. She would consider Sao Paulo, but Tony did not want to go there because of the high rate of violence in that city. So later she agreed to move to Campinas, a city nearby.

And just as usual Tony went to Campinas to find the best houses and apartments available, and then brought Sharon and asked her to choose what she wanted. He rented them this penthouse over 4,500 sq ft, with all possible comforts, setup the apartment, hired maids, a personal driver for the family and everything you could possibly imagine.

Tony had everything planned in his mind. He would bring Sharon and the children to Campinas, he would wait the holidays and would go to Hong Kong with Anna Paola and later on he would tell Sharon about the divorce.

Now an interesting fact happened right around the holidays, some new business appeared to Exbrus Hong Kong. It was a contract with a furniture company that would need to close before the end of the year and since the Chinese new years is in January; everything works as normal in Hong Kong.

Tony, Sharon and the children were spending the holidays at Blacker's house in Itacu, he had done a renovation as well and his house was so impressive and bigger than Tony's home in Miami. And Tony did not notice anything wrong. Blacker had all of these excuses for how he got everything done so cheap. So Tony asked Sharon and Blacker about the business opportunity in Hong Kong and their opinion. Blacker immediately said he must go, because the company needs all the business possible at the moment; however, what Blacker wanted was Tony as far away as possible, so Tony would not mess up his plans. Sharon agreed as well after hearing all that, and she got sad because Tony had to travel. Tony was heartbroken as well, and did not want to go, he wanted to spend the holidays with the kids, but the business opportunities seemed to be real and Blacker advised that to go. So he went.

Well, since he had to go Tony called Anna Paola and asked if she would like to go with him, and instantly she most happily accepted the invitation. For Tony it would be their first travel since their relationship got serious. He really wanted to know how Anna Paola's behavior would be now. He still had memories of the old trip with her.

Furthermore, Tony would have to stop in Miami for the closing of a mortgage on his house to cover the company debts. They had made an agreement to pay by the end of the year, so they would not get additional penalties.

Tony stopped in Miami to sign all the contracts and make all the payments, and then went on his trip to Hong Kong with Anna Paola. As soon as he arrived in Hong Kong he set a meeting to get the contract signed, but the Chinese at the last minute decided to cancel - in other words, he traveled to Hong Kong for nothing. Even so, Tony took his time to make some business contacts and tried to enjoy the trip with Bella as much as possible.

Anna Paola changed her birth control pills and lost one of her packages on the trip. Those pills had different colors, and according to the day she has to take a different pill, so she got a new package. She started from the beginning and she got this terrible bleeding right on New Year's Day. Tony without knowing those things took her to a clinic and she had to rest for three days at the hotel. What a holiday!

On their way back Tony took Anna Paola to Las Vegas, and he had so much fun seeing her emotions through her eyes in all those places. Bella without a doubt it is great company, thought Tony!

They came back to Brazil and Tony was so sure about what he wanted, he wanted to stay with Bella, to be happy at her side, he really enjoyed her company and he did not want to hide it anymore from anyone.

He set a meeting with Sharon's psychologist and explained to her the situation, because he wanted to tell her the truth. He wanted Sharon to know from him, believing that if he would tell her the truth he may not lose her trust. After all, they had three children and he did not want to lose her trust. He asked the psychologist her advice and she told him to set an appointment at her office so the three of them could talk. Tony wanted to get out of this relationship!

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

WANTING TO GET OUT

"I was in love with loving"

Saint Augustine

He set a new appointment and wrote a letter, because he knew he couldn't say everything that was on his mind to Sharon. He showed the letter to the psychologist and she asked him: *Are you sure about this?* And he said yes! Everything set, he told Sharon that he wanted to talk to her, but wanted to do this together with the psychologist. When they got together he explained to Sharon that he wrote a letter to better describe what he wanted to say. Tony really took his time explaining everything that had been happening and why he was making this decision, but when Sharon read the letter the only thing she could read was the name of Anna Paola. Some things are already written, she had an argument with Anna Paola during the Rodeo Show Festival, it was like she already knew this! So, she loses her senses, and started to break everything in the doctor's office and hitting Tony as hard as she could.

The doctor tried to calm Sharon down by saying that this was a love proof! Bullshit! I just want to be honest! I want to get out of this marriage! Tony was thinking, but he let the doctor continue as he wanted to calm her down. Later on she calmed down, but was very aggressive; after they left the doctor's office on the way to Tony's parents she tried to jump out of the car. Tony had to hold her as strong as he could. When arrived at his parents she began to hit him again. After seeing all this, Tony led her to believe that he would not separate. At some point Tony wanted to laugh at Sharon, to see her as crazy as she got. I guess when you mix too much emotion; you lose even your feelings!

Try for a moment to be in Tony's shoes. What would you do based on the information he got? He seems to be completely lost and I guess when you start one thing wrong, the next follows, and so on. And to make matters worse he hired a private detective to follow Anna Paola, he wanted to make sure that she loves him (what other proofs does he need?) and not his social status. And guess what? The detective finds that she has going out with a person. He has no proof of anything, just reports that she was with this guy.

Well, Tony is lost; Sharon now pressured him to break up with Anna Paola. So, he called Anna Paola and told her that she has five minutes to tell him what is going on or it is over! Anna Paola became very irritated and told him that she had nothing to say and Tony decided to break with her. His decision was done!

Late January, 2003 - Tony followed his plan to go to Hong Kong to search for new business, because according to Blacker, it would be impossible to get new business in Brazil. He got a second mortgage on his home in Miami and paid all debts for the corporation, leaving it with a zero balance for all suppliers. Out this amount he reserved five hundred thousand, in case everything does not work, and the way things were going, he was sure he would have to close the business.

In Brazil, Blacker kept up with the construction of the warehouse in Arica, taking all kinds of money to build it, but according to Blacker was a good investment for the company. But the truth was that he was using this, among other things, to get money out of the corporation.

Sharon now completely changed herself! No more depression! She became a new woman, she dressed differently, she lost weight, she wanted to go out and all of a sudden she was the woman Tony dreamed about some time ago. So, Tony thought maybe this whole thing happened to make his relationship work out. Maybe that was the purpose. So he decided to give Sharon another chance and brought her with him to Hong Kong.

But even with all of the changes in Sharon, no matter what he did, Tony couldn't forget Bella, she was everywhere, and now he hated the nickname he has given her, everywhere he looked there seemed to be a Bella written. Notice how popular this name is next time you are on the streets. Tony would go to same places he had gone before with Bella, but it was not the same thing, the magic was not in the air, the synchronism wasn't there! And his mind was with Bella at all times.

But Tony kept his word, did not speak with Anna Paola anymore and dedicated himself mostly to Exbrus Hong Kong. He brought Marcos Paz to help with presentations to partners and prospects. They spoke with lots of people and as usual Marcos was a great collaborator. Tony really enjoys working with him; they have a good synchronism as well.

On early April, 2003 Tony started to receive reports that suppliers are not being paid in Miami, because no more are coming from the Sao Paulo office. Tony called Blacker and got very aggressive with him saying, *"What is going on, Blacker, I paid all bills, why are you not making the payments, do I have to go there to handle this?"* He was quite mad! And of course, yet again there was sweet talk and excuses from Blacker. What a guy?

Soon after the SARS crisis came and Hong Kong looked like a ghost town now, the press overreacted and Tony was forced to return. Sharon came back a week early and went to Brazil.

On his way back to Brazil he stopped in Miami and looked at the books and discovered that the bills were almost a million dollars again! He spent his birthday in Miami and took the day off, going to the beach trying to think what to do now.

Tony was more worried about the people who worked for him, than himself, he knew that no matter what he would survive, but those people who had been working for him might not have the same luck. So, he began to think how to make everyone OK if he decided to close down.

He planned to shut the operation down, and would give part of the operation that was still good to Bernard Silva, Carlos Costa, Carmen Cardoso and Magda Bremen in Brazil and the Miami operation to Robert Johnson and Neli Brux. Blacker would keep

the operation in Chile, that Tony had invested almost a million dollars in by now and Tony would keep the Hong Kong operation, which was an office with no assets.

Neli Brux: She was Brazilian hired by Tony in Miami, she knew nothing about logistics, she was trained and Tony would have applied for a business green card for her in the USA.

Carmen Cardoso: She was hired by Blacker in Sao Paulo. She was in a sales representative for Exbrus; she was famous for her crises in the company, but she was a really good professional.

Magda Bremen: She was hired by Tony, and was the first receptionist for Exbrus in Sao Paulo and the oldest employee by now. She was a perfect receptionist! Always had smile on her face and always ready to help.

Tony returned to Brazil, got his parents, Sharon and Blacker and told them that there was no way he could continue like this. He had been holding this company for the last two years, and had no more money to continue to hold it. He wanted to shut it down and lay down the plans he had made up.

I believe that on this day Blacker had his dream come true! He got it! He finally completely destroyed Tony and, on the top of that, he would get to keep the business for himself alone. This was the perfect crime! No one would ever know!

But the greed is always there, so the bastard was not happy yet, he wanted to finish like a perfect gentleman. See, he knew how Tony would react, he knew that when Tony made a decision he would not change it, so he very politely said:

"No, Tony you can not do this, we are going to get out of this mess! If we have money anyone could do it, we can do it. I know it!"

So, for the first time Tony reconsidered a decision. He thought, man what am I doing, I am being selfish, those guys want to fight, and I am giving up! So, that was the day Blacker will regret from this day until he dies, as Tony came back and said:

"OK, Blacker, we stay on, let's make it happen!!!"

Not a word came out from Blacker's mouth that day! I keep wondering if Blacker could not sleep that night; he wanted to eat his words, he had messed up all of his devilish plans!

So, once more Tony gathered up all of his energies (I don't know where this guy gets so much of this) to get the business back on track. He devised some plans. First he could not put up with all the briberies going on everywhere in Brazil, according to Blacker, (and obviously that was made up 90% by Blacker) so he decided to get a politician to be a part of the business, so he would be able to protect himself, according to what he had learned and heard from other people, and he also would bring an investor into the business. If he could get this, it seemed that he would have solved the two major challenges of the business.

The planet earth is a small world and people sometimes forget this, but remember the private detective that Tony had hired before to follow Anna Paola? Well, in a conversation with this guy he explained the problems that he was facing at the company, and the detective told him that one of his clients and friends was the congressman Pedro Cano and if Tony wished he could introduce him to Tony, and logically Tony said yes.

Pedro Cano: Brazilian congressman, at a young age, and his motives are: You name your price and I can get it for you! His father was the famous Senator Paulo Cano, ex-director of the National Agency.

So Tony met Congressman Pedro Cano, and he liked the kid, although he was a politician and it seemed his interest was about money at all times. He informed Tony that he was looking to get a real estate lot at the Rodeo Show in Jaguariuna, and if Tony could help him to get it (for free, of course). And since Tony knows everyone there and just had made the event, he offered to help him, and Tony saw this as an opportunity to show his background as well.

It's amazing what a person's actions are, if they are manipulated wrong. Otherwise, your decisions are based on the information you have. If you have the wrong information for sure you will make the wrong decisions, and that's what Blacker had done, he nicely provided all of the wrong information, not only to Tony, but to everyone around, so he could gain control of the situation and benefit from it. And for most of the people Tony's actions was crazy. But if you look back this only happened when he lost control after the argument with his parents and his brother's death, which really made things easy for Blacker.

Now let's talk about the big mistakes or luck of Tony's. By now Tony could not resist the pressure of Blacker, who knew Tony still had personal money left. He would manipulate Tony to put personal money into the business, and would manage not to get it back to Tony. Tony had made friends with Albert Santos in Campinas, and he wanted to sell Tony a helicopter, and of course, Tony was in no condition to get those things, although it would have been nice to have one, especially now living in Campinas, as it would make his life a lot easier.

Albert Santos: Owner of a local helicopter dealer in Campinas, they share the common experience of living in Los Angeles, although they just met in Campinas. He is also Tony's neighbor and Tony likes him very much!

So after many times talking with Tony, Albert wanted to sell him a helicopter, not knowing Tony's situation. So one day Tony made a proposal to him. *"I know you need money, so I can do this for you, you give me the title of one your helicopters, and I will loan the money to you, and part of the interest you can pay in flight hours. That way I can have the helicopter when I need it, and for you there are less costs than getting money in a Brazilian bank."* Tony's idea was to tie up his personal money somewhere, so he would not put this money into the corporation, as he had done until now and at the same time have the helicopter hours for free.

Also, Albert asked Tony to help him out in the USA to purchase some used helicopters. Tony always loved aviation, as a matter of fact, he started his pilot's license in Los Angeles, back in 1981, but he never finished the pilot's course. He did, however, learn enough to fly small planes, and aviation was always something that he liked as well. And in the middle of so many challenges, that would work like a getaway for him. So he started to look for ads in newspapers and on the Internet. Understand, Tony is always looking for new opportunities, and he found an ad that interested him, for a Cessna 421B twin-engine plane that had an incredible price. He decides to call. The plane was located in Memphis (FedEx town), and Tony always wanted to visit FedEx, so he decided to take a look at the small plane. He also learned that the price for cargo planes had come down a lot by now, and you could buy a DC-10 for less than two million dollars.

On a weekend Tony went to Memphis to see the small plane and visit FedEx operations. When he arrived, a FedEx pilot and his son came to show him the plane, and they took it for a two hour flight. They reported the plane was good; it only needed to upgrade the avionics and to fix the air-conditioning, so Tony knew the asking price was half of the blue book price. He recognized an opportunity to invest his personal money and to make some profit as well. When they landed he called the owner, who was a broker, and negotiated to lower the price, but he made no commitment yet, so some other people from Florida arrived and tell them they just bought the plane. Tony got mad now, call the guy and he closed the deal and bought the plane. What an adventure!

The next step was to fly the plane to Florida. The FedEx pilot could not fly there that same day, but Tony wanted to. So he called several people and finally found a pilot as crazy as him in Miami, and he flew to Memphis to bring the plane back. The pilot arrived late a night, and at 11:30 P.M. they took off, and Tony was amazed with all the planes from FedEx, they would stay on a traffic hold for almost an hour before they could fly to Miami. They got to Miami about 6:00 A.M. and when they were about to land, the landing gear light did not turn on, so the pilot had to fly by the tower a couple of times, in order for the ground people to see if the landing gear was down. It was, but to be on safe side the firemen were called and they were able to land OK. But for a minute there the adrenaline was rolling!

Tony was now so determined to bring in new business he decided to lease a new warehouse in Miami, so he could bring more customers and that would be a new source for additional income. He looked for it, and found a great deal on a sublease from a Japanese company.

In time Blacker called Tony and told him that his parents were spending too much money in Sao Paulo, and suggested that they should return to Jaguariuna, where the expenses would be less. He created a fake report and Tony believed him. Mr. and Mrs. Lima were very upset with the decision, and Blacker stopped sending money to them, (they were on the payroll) without Tony's knowledge. Now, although Tony was not talking to his parents much, he never let them down; he always made sure they were OK. Again, Blacker's intention was to make sure no one was around, and of course, now he was really mad, now like never before he wanted knock Tony down to the ground!

Blacker also managed to stop the operation with an Exbrus corporation in Vitoria. He setup a deal with a customs inspector that put the import license on hold, and then reported to Tony, but told him that he already had the solution, because he got a company in Curitiba with better incentives. What Tony did not know was that this corporation was in Blacker's name, and bought with Exbrus funds of course, so he could control everything without anyone's knowledge. He already had setup a new plan to destroy Tony completely now!

But Tony looked at it with good eyes and saw a new opportunity, since the fiscal benefits were higher than his old corporation and added two and two and got a new idea.

Remember the cargo plane he saw at the newspaper ad before? Well, he got an idea! Remember, we have a guy desperate to save his business, that he thinks is going down, and he would try everything to save it… after all, this is big dream! His idea was inspired by the fact that he had worked with two other companies in the past that had a project with air cargo routes from USA and Brazil, and the demand for it was

very high by now - with air-freight rates high. He also knew that if he was able to establish a new route he would be able to get financing for the project and with a venture like that would be easy to get funds to finance the project. And that could help to save the corporation as well.

So the plan was to get a new route from Miami to Curitiba, and initially he would charter the flights and later on once he had the route established, he would lease a DC-10 and would get the necessary financing for the project, but he had to establish the route first. In addition to his idea, he was to purchase and sell the products. That way he could benefit with the taxes savings program of Curitiba, and even if he had to give half of that benefit to the clients, he still would be able to get some money for the business as well. It really made sense; all you need is someone with the courage to make it. And we have Tony Lima, where courage is not a problem!

He called virtually all of the cargo charter companies on the planet and began to negotiate, and I tell you this is his specialty, that is what made Exbrus succeed so quickly in the past! After getting the best price around he negotiated with a local company, and got them to match the best quote he had received.

Next thing: to get all the licenses, and permission in Brazil and most important: Clients! He called his friend Alberto Santos asked him to send a personal jet on his credits and puts his EGO really high and went to talk to the local authorities at the Curitiba airport. He quickly got all of that done and approved. Next, to visit the clients, this time he got a helicopter and started to make cold calls at all of the large companies around that state. How many people do you know who make cold call by helicopter? I only know one: Tony Lima. And he made a point, and got everyone's attention, everyone knew about the new route. And of course he let all of the press know about it, too, which made free advising for him.

Everything seemed to be working well; everyone liked the idea for the route, although they had many experiences in the past of companies that started the route and give up after some time. So business people wanted to make sure he would come to stay, and for sure they would give their business, and there was plenty for a weekly flight.

By now Exbrus Miami had moved in to the new warehouse, and had already gotten new clients, but not enough to cover the lease payment. He also got agents in Miami and Brazil to sell air-freight as well.

Everything set, he needed to start the route, and for that he needed money. So he went to the banks, drew on all of his personal credit, sold his Porsche and hired the four charter flights.

Next step he needed to bring the plane at full cargo and that is 62 tons (136,400 lbs) to fly in and 62 tons to fly back; pure and simple no? For a regular person no, but for Tony Lima nothing is impossible, he believes impossible is a state of mind, it is impossible only if you believe that it is impossible. He walked into the warehouse, and saw the major stock of air-conditioning units that belonged to the landlord client. So he called the landlord and asked who was his client and discovered that it was a Korean company, and he called the company and asked them if could sell it to Exbrus. Of course the Koreans would sell but on a cash advance basis only. But you know, when someone says no to Tony… No means explain it to me better, tell me more, repeat again, convince me more, show me another way, etc…. So one thing led to another and he invited the responsible guy for a drink at his home (the renovated one). And I tell you, once the guy walked into his house; he only would get out if Tony got

what he wanted, and no need to say that when the Korean guy left his house, Tony could buy the whole Korean corporation on a credit basis!

Perfect, Tony thought, if everything goes wrong we sell it at cost in Brazil and we still have 90 days of floating money. So let's go, set a date, notify all local press, get an ad in the Gazeta Mercantil (similar to the Wall Street Journal in the USA) and let's make history.

He personally helped to load the plane with the 62 tons, fully loaded! And he flew on the first trip. That's a moment you could take a picture (a Kodak moment) of Tony while inside of the plane, flying together with the pilot and first officer in the cockpit of a DC-10, that emotion and the responsibility together is something hard to describe, but not fear, that is something that Tony's learned to control; as a matter fact, instead of having fear, he actually had fan, as he likes to have the adrenaline on!

They were able to take off early and got to Curitiba ahead of schedule, just like everything else that Exbrus does. It was a beautiful day, clear skies, although it was cold, and the weather was fantastic! And Tony had no idea about the impact he was about to make! When he arrived all possible press was there: TV newscasts, newspapers, magazines, you name it was there!

At night with Marcos Paz celebrating the success at this local bar, they could not believe it made the news on all the local TV stations, and on the national TV, with a whole block of 10 minutes on the news. Do you have any idea of the effect of that? And if you were to pay, how much would that cost? But steadily working to bring in new clients, guess whose attention he got? All the major airlines! And they did not want competition! They believed that Exbrus was so big that it would take most of their business, so they retailed by lowering their prices, no matter what, whatever price Exbrus would offer, they would give a lower rate. And of course, Blacker gave a little help to make it not work as well. And to make things worse he could sell the air-conditioner units for no price, since that was a very unusually cold winter. So to make a long story short, he couldn't keep up with project, lost his ass on it, and had to bring all the air-conditioning units back to Miami to the Korean supplier.

Remember Gary Nobel (Tony's friend from Jaguariuna)? He had by now loaned Tony three hundred thousand dollars and he loaned another two hundred making a total of five hundred thousand, and to secure that loan Tony made Blacker sign over the stocks of the corporation that owned the property to Gary, even though Gary never wanted that, as he had full trust in Tony (thank God, Tony did some thing right!)

In the middle of this mess, Tony missed Anna Paola a lot, so he called her and she agreed to meet him. It was unbelievable, when they looked each other; it seemed that it never ended! It looked just like six months ago! So they decide to reestablish the relationship.

Tony once more talked to Sharon, to ask for the divorce; Sharon returned with the aggression again (that's how she manipulates Tony), although this time he made no mention of Anna Paola, (at last he had learned something!) he just said that he was not happy and wanted to get out. After that, Sharon went to the office and made a scene with all employees, reviewing all credit card bills, Tony's expenses in the past with Anna Paola.

Blacker informed Tony about the opening of the Exbrus Arica Bonded Warehouse in Chile. Tony felt so bad with all that was going on that he almost did not go to the opening; he just decided to go because Marcos Paz insisted.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE GRAND OPENING OF ARICA

"Hatred does not cease in this world by hating,
but by not hating; this is an eternal truth"

Buddha

Tony arrived in Arica and was surprised by the huge party for five hundred people with the participation of the President of Chile. Blacker had not informed him of the details other than that they would have an opening in Arica. In addition Blacker invited several people from Brazil to come with their wives, with all expenses paid by Exbrus. Tony argued with Blacker and as usual he would come up with all kinds of excuses, and Tony would believe it! (What planet is Tony on?)

The inauguration party was a great success with all the local press, the President of Chile, ministers, ambassadors, politicians, and other high authorities present. At least Tony started to believe there might be potential there. This was Blacker territory and he did not interfere.

When Tony returned he talked to his friend, Pierre LaCosta (the neighbor) to explain the situation of the company, and convinced him to join the company. Pierre was scheduled for a vacation but on his return he would do as Tony asked. And he did; not only had he put money in the business, he left his own endeavors to help Tony. Of course Tony gave him a second mortgage on the warehouse and one of his personal properties. Pierre really dedicated himself even helping with the day-to-day activities at the Exbrus warehouse.

Blacker did not like this at all. He got desperate by this point, having a new company partner that he did not want. So he started to make excuses to come to Miami, and tried at all costs to approach Pierre; he needed to control him, otherwise he was, as we say, fucked! Tony didn't understand all of this interest on Blacker's part. What is the problem? The guy was helping us and putting money in the business, and slowly things were moving, Tony thought.

Blacker managed to set a meeting at the Miami office without Tony's knowledge, got everyone together including Pierre and announced to all that Exbrus was a fantastic corporation; the only problem was Tony who was spending all the corporation's money, and even worse was taking money needed to pay suppliers and using it personally. He was spending on helicopters, planes, and trips. This was the same story that he had already told in the Brazil office as well. It makes sense to everyone because nobody knew the true facts other than Tony and Blacker.

Now let's stop for a second. This Blacker guy is good; the SOB does all the shit, and yet he managed to put the blame on the very guy he is stealing from; is he good or what? Could you for a second imagine if he invested all his intelligence together with Tony for the common good? I guess some people are born to be bad. It was in the blood; there is no other explanation.

Tony had no knowledge of these facts and he was still pursuing his plan to put the business on track. When he got back to Brazil he called Pedro Cano (the politician), setting a weekend aside to go to Jaguariuna to help him acquire the lot at Rodeo Show Park. He also took the opportunity to introduce his family and his background to Cano, and he set up a meeting in the Team Park Hotel called Ubatan, built by his Uncle Frederico. He managed to bring Blacker, Pierre LaCosta, Cano and himself to this historic meeting.

Again Tony called Santos and ordered a helicopter to take Cano to Jaguariuna and after then to Ubatan Team Park Hotel. So everything worked perfectly. Tony and Cano spent Saturday in Jaguariuna, where Tony's mother prepared this great dinner for them. Tony really wanted to impress this guy, because he believed he could help Exbrus a lot. So the next day they flew to the Ubatan Hotel and on the way over, Tony stopped at the old farm where he was raised until age 13. Cano could not believe that Tony came from such a humble place.

Although, like many, Tony was skeptical about politicians, for the moment he really believed that this guy could be different, especially because he was the son of ex-director of the National Agency.

They arrived at lunchtime, and Blacker and Pierre came later to enjoy the dinner and for the meeting. Tony explained his plans for Exbrus, and suggested to make all four partners. He told everyone that this was a unique opportunity. He said, *"If none of us try to outsmart the other, we can make more money than we all could spend. I'm so sure of that."* At such times Tony felt that he could see the future.

Tony stayed and Blacker, Pierre and Cano returned together. Blacker again repeated his allegations about Tony. *"Exbrus is fantastic, the problem is Tony, and we must eliminate him!"*

The story now becomes a nightmare, the ones from which you can not wake up! What Tony did not know was that a private investigator had researched everyone's lives, and easily discovered what Blacker was doing. He had a history of being him a con man. Tony was completely unaware of this, so the private investigator and Cano got together, and made Blacker a pay-off offer. They asked for one million dollars, and believe it or not, Blacker still tried to make Tony pay that.

Blacker had set up some offshore accounts in Chile and all the money from Exbrus Sao Paulo would go there first, and after to Exbrus Miami. The reasoning offered by Blacker was that Customs would fine the corporation if the exporter were related to the importer. Tony believed that and was setup in a way that only Tony or Blacker could check. Since Tony never checked it, the people from the office never found out, because, it seems that Blacker was doing his job, and in fact he was getting all the money that comes in Sao Paulo. Instead of paying suppliers, he was paying his own accounts! And believe it or not, Tony doesn't find this out! And everyone believes that Tony is taking the money and not using it for the corporation.

Even with all this mess, things started to work now. New projects came along with new clients and a large project from PepsiCo. Pierre hired a finance guy to work in Sao Paulo, and Blacker was completely out of control now. He manipulated the guy in

every imaginable way, and began to make comments to Tony about Pierre and vice versa, trying to create discord between Tony and Pierre. I tell you, Blacker was good. He gets it! Pretty soon Tony hated Pierre and Pierre hated Tony! Pierre was very similar to Tony, believing in people and he started to believe in Blacker.

Blacker needed to get Tony out, so he came up with an excuse that Tony must go to visit the PepsiCo supplier in Taiwan, because there is the next project, and they need it. It seemed like we are going to lose it for a Brazilian supplier. Again Tony believed and decided to go to Taiwan.

Tony talked again with Sharon about the divorce, and it seemed that she might be OK, but now she wanted to return to Miami; she wanted to establish her own business, and she wanted to buy a new car. Tony said OK, and they went together to Miami. Blacker also made another excuse to go to Miami as well.

When they got together in Miami, Blacker wanted very badly to get close to Pierre, and again he also managed to make everyone in Miami believe that Tony was crazy.

Tony flew to Hong Kong and Taiwan and visited the supplier, and to his surprise the supplier knew nothing of his visit, and even refused to talk to him. Tony was so upset, he believed that PepsiCo from Brazil did not communicate with the supplier; he tried to explain but nothing worked. Later he talked to Bernard Silva at the Sao Paulo office who by now was making the plans to kick Tony out. He blamed everything on PepsiCo, and told Tony to bring a sample of the goods for testing, because they had not received a package sent before. So, on the way back, Tony stopped again at the supplier and tried to explain to the manager's secretary that he wanted to take some samples. After she went into a back office a guy comes out screaming at Tony saying, *"I do not want to talk to you, and nobody from PepsiCo has authorized me to give you anything."* Tony thought he was doing this for his client in Brazil, and this guy just now had become an asshole. He got very mad and talked back to the guy and the guy called the Security people to get Tony out of his office! And Tony left the building without taking the samples. He was furious now!

Tony went to Hong Kong, and learned that Sharon had gone to the Exbrus office and again made a scene. When he tried to call her later she did not answer the mobile phone. Later still she hung up on him and he hears laughter in the background. Next day he learned that she was going out to dinner with Pierre. Now try to add one thing to another here, Tony was already mad with the guy and he found out that he is taking his wife out. Even though he didn't want her anymore, he found Pierre's behavior very offensive. Everything made sense: He is the one who wants to put me down, he thought.

And to make this worse Sharon took advantage of it, and lied to Tony, telling him that she went out with a friend. Really furious Tony returned to Miami. And Sharon played Tony good; she did her little games, pretending that she was sick because she knew sooner or later Tony would come back to her. Amazing, isn't it?

Tony arrived in Miami and Sharon had left for Brazil. And things started to go wrong, all the way. His attorney from Miami, Mark Campus called him and told him that he wanted to meet him but not in his office. He wanted to meet him at a bar after work.

Mark Campos: Tony had hired him as the attorney for Exbrus and they became friends as well.

So later they met, and the first thing Campus said was, *"Who the fuck is this guy Pierre LaCosta and what are you doing with him?"*

Tony said, *"Why?"*

Campus advised that Pierre and Robert were at his office charging that Tony was taking the money from suppliers and not paying them and this was a crime here! Tony could not believe it. He hated this Pierre and he wanted to see him dead!

So the next day he called Robert, who confirmed the conversation and started accusing Tony. Why are you doing this? Why are you messing up the business? This was unbelievable from the guy hired to be the controller, and even he does not realize what is going on, Tony thought. Next he called Pierre and Robert to his office and explained to both what had been going on during the two last years, that he had all his personal funds in the business and how could he do such a thing? And Robert must be aware. So at this point Pierre said, *"You must clarify that with Blacker and your people in Brazil. That is not what they are saying."*

More than ever Tony was convinced that Pierre was there to destroy him! And he could not get the guy out, because all the money was tied up with his properties and he could not pay him back yet.

That evening Tony discovered that a new personal credit card had come and Neli had put it in the company safe, by Robert's office with the following comment: keep this in the safe, otherwise Tony will spend it all again! And maybe we can use it to pay other bills. Tony, flaming now, went to Robert's office and asked him and he confirmed the story. I will tell you, poor Robert heard everything that was stuck in Tony's heart. And Tony fired him. Neli had already left for the day, so he sent a message by phone. By now there were few employees left. Tony was so disheartened by what he considered a betrayal from those two people who he liked so much, and had been so close to him. In Tony's minds all the blame was on Pierre; he was the SOB behind all this shit! Blacker once more did it good!

Tony called his sister to help him out, and she did; soon she was able to handle everything, and together with Tony they were able to do the job.

So the game was good for Blacker. He next called Tony's parents and Sharon, and told them that Tony was crazy and needed professional care and that he must go to a clinic for treatment. The kind of institution he was talking about is like a prison. Of course Tony knew nothing of this!

And believe it or not even Mr. Lima believes that. It was Sandra who in Miami saw Tony and told his father, that crazy is the only thing that Tony is not. He never worked so much, she told Mr. Lima.

In the middle of this mess Tony had to stay in Miami, and since Sharon wanted to come back, he brought her and the kids back to Miami. This was towards the end of 2003. And again Tony ended the relationship with Anna Paola.

Blacker now told Tony what he had found out through one of his friends who worked for the police (one of those very corrupt kinds). And he stated that because the delayed taxes would come to this office, that they must move to a different location. Tony again believed in Blacker.

Let's stop for a second now. I believe that Tony was crazy! How can that be? How could he not see? If the police were looking for him or the business, does it matter if he moved? I think that Blacker was right and he needed special treatment!

So, Tony went to Brazil and following the Blacker's suggestion rented a new location, one for the Sales and Finance Department and another for the Operations Department.

Right before Christmas 2003, Sandra returned to Brazil and continued working at the Sao Paulo office. Tony hired new employees and planned to move back to a small office at the NNR Air cargo, the same place he had started the business in Miami, way back. He walked away from the lease on a not so friendly agreement. But what to do?

Gary Nobel, his friend from Jaguariuna came to spend the holidays with Tony, and to Tony's surprise Arthur, his oldest son, now 18 came to live with him. That was a big dream of Tony's, he knew one day he would come; of course he did not like the whole situation, but he believed that nothing was coincidence, and there must be a reason for that.

Blacker continued his program of disinformation to confuse Tony, and told him that most of the customers would be closed for the holidays, and he would close the Brazil office as well. Tony found it strange he never heard this before. He also told Tony that he had some money from loan sharks and had several checks returned from the bank as *"insufficient."*

Tony did not understand, because the business was OK. In December alone they had sold over three million dollars, how could we not have the money to pay? And the transactions had a very good profit, but Tony could leave his friend to go to Sao Paulo, and he had to move the Miami office at the beginning of the year.

December 31. 2003 – Tony received a phone call that his father just had a heart attack and was in Jaguariuna. He instantly called Blacker to ask for help. Blacker had no intention of helping. Tony found it strange that even at Christmas Blacker did not call him. Tony took the first flight to Brazil, and spent New Year's Eve with his father; the danger had already passed, and he was OK. So he returned on the following day.

Tony returned to get the moving done, and found it very strange that nobody, either Blacker or Bernard went to visit his father. They used to like him so much. Only Carlos Costa went to see him.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

TAKING CHARGE!

"I know in my heart that man is good.
That what is right will always eventually triumph.
And there's purpose and worth to each and every life"

Ronald Reagan

January 06, 2004 – Blacker called Tony and told him that some checks were returned on the business account in Brazil, and that the clients in a specific PepsiCo deal did not pay as agreed.

Tony replied, *"Blacker, I don't like what's go on, I am going to Brazil."* Tony, very upset, arrived in Brazil and decided to fire Bernard and Blacker, not liking anything that was going on. He thought that Pierre was behind this but at no time did he think that Blacker was; only that he was a bad Finance Manager, and was not controlling the payments correctly.

Tony had just arrived at Exbrus Sao Paulo and had just walked in his office when Bernard came in and quit. Tony asked him why and he said that he was tired and wanted to rest; after that he would look for a new job. Tony suspected that he already had a new job. Bernard had always been a trustworthy man, and Tony had no idea that he had already setup everything with Blacker. The only company with all licenses to import was registered under his name, because of Blacker's suggestion in the past. So Tony let him walk out without signing anything.

Tony went to the Finance Department and asked Teresa (the girl in charge of Finance), what was going on and where the returned checks were. Without answering the young woman got up and walked out of the office. An enraged Tony went to Blacker's office and asked him, *"What fucking checks have been returned, Blacker?"*

And Blacker calmly answered, *"No, they tried to cash it at the bank; the checks were not returned."* Tony couldn't believe anybody any longer, so he called everyone into his office, and fired Blacker and most of the employees, except six. He explained that he did not know what was going on, and for the moment everyone was fired, except those six, but he would hire them back if he could figure out what was going on!

The Plan: Tony had no idea what they had planned! At first Blacker had convinced Pierre to come with him. Then he contacted all of the employees, including Neli from Miami, who Tony had fired. The only exception was Carlos Costa, Carmen (the sales lady) and Magda (the receptionist), because they were close to Tony and therefore not

trustworthy. The plan was brilliant. They had both local corporations (importer and a distribution) titled under Bernard and his brother who worked at the distribution center. All this had been planned by Blacker. The idea was to take over all the business from Exbrus, telling the clients that Exbrus closed down and that they would conveniently operate the business, since there was no more Exbrus. So this scenario would put the onus on Tony. Of course for Blacker, this plan was almost a joke because with all the money he had stolen by now, he could retire for the rest of his life.

The next day Tony arrived at the office and Blacker, pretending nothing happened, was there. He was on the phone talking to Pierre, telling him that he could not make the payment, because Tony was there. Tony walked in to his office and asked, *"Who are you talking to, Blacker?"*

Blacker pressed the speaker phone button, and started speaking very loud to alert Pierre. *"What are you doing, Tony? What is it?"*

"That is it! Game over!" Tony could not take this anymore, so he snatched up the stapler on the desk, and wanted to staple the SOB on his head, but instead he slammed it on the glass table, breaking it into pieces. Tony kicked Blacker out of his office like a dog. (Man, about time!)

Believe or not, Tony had no suspicion whatsoever that Blacker was stealing money from him. Blacker left the office and called the girl from the Finance Department. He went to the bank and cashed out all the money from the business and deposited it to Pierre's account supposedly; that was approximately two hundred thousand dollars.

This whole mess was happening while Mr. Lima was still recovering at the hospital, and he was the only person other than Blacker who signed the accounts, because Tony never stayed in Brazil, so his name wasn't on any of the accounts. If Mr. Lima had died, that would have been paradise for Blacker!

Tony only learned of this the next day, and cancelled all the signatures at all banks, changed passwords, and called all clients and instructed them not to do any more deposits to Exbrus until further notice. He called PepsiCo and set a meeting that had a deposit for Exbrus that day in the amount of five hundred thousand dollars. When he arrived he learned that Blacker and Bernard had already been there, and told them that they were taking over the business because Tony would take their money and would not pay any suppliers. He told them that since they still had the old staff they would be able to do the job just fine.

The following day two additional employees quit and Tony discovered that Blacker had changed the name on the lease contract for one of the offices Tony had leased previously (in other words this office was leased by Tony, and Blacker just made it his new office) and they were working at this location already.

That weekend Tony called Cano (the politician) to see if he could help, and again Tony had no idea that he was also part of the plot, and he immediately offered his help, came to the office to meet Tony and took everything that was in Blacker's office including a computer notebook, saying that he would take this to the Federal Police so they could examine it! He probably sold everything back to Blacker and making a joke, saying how stupid he was by leaving all that proof behind (is this Tony stupid or naive?) and on top of that recommended that Tony move out of the office.

Tony called Cano a few days later to find out about the investigation and asked if he would bring the computer back. Only then did he find out that Cano was part of the plot.

So Tony called some people he knew and started to hire new employees. At this point the accountant called and told Tony that he was aware of what was going on and he would like to be a mediator between Tony, Blacker and Bernard.

Tony agreed and the next day set a meeting. Up to this point Tony still had no proof that he was being robbed.

Next day he was at a studio hotel with his parents. Mr. Lima was out already and Tony was exhausted and almost crying. He said to his parents, *"I can't take this anymore! I do not want this! I will give everything to these people!"* After his father talked to him he calmed down, and accompanied Tony to the meeting. Even having just been released from the hospital his father was a big help.

When they got to the meeting at the accountant's office, they went into the conference room. Blacker, Bernard and the accountant were there: Tony was with his father and two attorneys. Tony looked at Blacker and Bernard and asked, *"What else do you want from me?"*

Bernard said, *"We are going to tell you what you have to do, Tony."*

Boy that was it! This clerk acting as a professional entrepreneur! Bernard's voice seemed to energize Tony, who finally took charge of the situation. Tony asked everyone to step out side, and the accountant looked at him, and said, *"This is my office."*

Tony replied, *"I know it is your office, and I also know you have no other room, so please step out."* From this moment on Tony was filled with all of the power of the universe and took charge of the meeting and listened to all the stupidity of the cowards.

Again, Tony still thought that all they were doing was taking his company; after all, this already had happened three times before. He yet hadn't realized about the robbery, and that was big! And of course Blacker was the only beneficiary; the others were used by him.

Tony got the situation under control, asking Blacker what was his situation with the company, and how much does the company owe him. (Can you believe this guy? With all this shit going on and Tony still worried about the asshole.) They had a proposition. Bernard stated it. They said that they would keep the Brazilian corporation and they wanted Tony to give them some clients and they would help Tony import the goods temporarily to Brazil and they would charge 5%. And Blacker, (Mr. Nice Guy) said, *"No, Bernard, 5% is too much, let's charge 2.5%."* His good will was truly unbelievable!

They even took meeting notes, where they would mention all the topics that they would send to Tony later.

They left the meeting and one of the attorneys suggested lunch at a nearby Arabic restaurant. Tony agreed and guess what a coincidence? When Tony arrived at the restaurant he found Pierre waiting for Blacker and Bernard to find out the outcome of the meeting. What a small world! Of all the restaurants in that area, and there were hundreds, they ran into Pierre. And Tony yet believed that he was the mentor of this coup. In truth Blacker had his next victim already! From one fool to the next one!

When he returned to the office Tony asked the Finance Manager, *"Have you found anything yet*?" And he showed Tony the account statement of one of the bank accounts. Out of more than three million dollars that had been deposited in this account, not a dime was sent to Miami, and it was only there that Tony finally realized what was going on, and he saw all kinds of payments sent to ghost companies.

Deposits in Blacker's personal accounts, in amounts in excess of two hundred thousand, restaurant bills in the amount of one thousand dollars; you name it was there. Tony could not believe what was happening. It was like a horror movie with no end. The coin had dropped!! Finally!!! They took him to the cleaners all right!!

Then Bernard's personal savings account statement arrived in the mail; that, believe it or not, used the company address, and showed a balance of over fifty thousand dollars, odd for a guy who had a salary of two thousand dollars per month. And of course Blacker made all of this look legal. According to the books these were commissions on sales. That's how he was able to manipulate Bernard. One can see Tony's rage. Tony's personal account balance that month was under two thousand dollars.

Tony, now desperate, consulted with the attorneys and called a sheriff from the Federal Police, who he had met some time ago, in one of Blacker's imposters. Blacker had never met this guy. Tony explained what happened and he suggested setting a meeting because they had an obligation to report what went on, and Tony did not want to involve police at this time; he only wanted his company title back, so he could operate the business. At this point Tony had no employees and no company to operate. The Sheriff agreed to come to the meeting as an observer.

Tony set the meeting and Blacker agreed to come. Present were two Exbrus attorneys, the Sheriff, Tony and Teresa. Bernard did no show up. Teresa was now on the computer trying to show the statements, and she was shaking like a rattler, and was unable to answer any of Tony's questions. So Tony started to question Blacker and asked him about the money transferred to his personal account. Blacker claimed that the money was used to bribe the customs inspectors!

At this moment the Sheriff got up and identified himself. Addressing himself to Blacker, he said, *"I have heard enough, there have been so many crimes committed here, that since I am here as a friend and Tony does not wish to prosecute I recommend you settle it with him otherwise there will be trouble ahead for you."*

Amazingly, Blacker kept acting like nothing had happened. Since, according to him, he knew nothing about the system and by now Teresa would have left. Tony picked up a piece of paper and asked. *"OK, Blacker, forget the system; we had three million dollars last month. Is this correct?"*

He agreed.

Tony went on. *"So just give me the checks and payments you have made; just the large ones leave the small ones out."* And he started to state all the payments that he did, and they amounted to two million dollars.

A very irritated Tony asked, *"Where is the rest of the money, Blacker?"*

Blacker kept insisting that he could find all the information on the company's financial software. He claimed it was all there.

Even now, armed with all the proof, Tony was so obstinate that he wanted to keep the business. In Brazil you need a license to import and it can take up to one year to get all the licenses required. How could he go on without a proper corporation? So he made the following proposal: *"Blacker, you bring Bernard here, sign over the stocks to me and you will go free. I will not take this to the police."*

Blacker agreed and said that would bring Bernard that evening.

Blacker would want to make this deal; basically he was the only one to benefit from the crime and it would be the perfect crime. Can you believe it? But then he talked to

Bernard and found that he obviously did not agree. So now Bernard was on Blacker's ass for a solution, because he would not give the corporation back. No way!

Tony, like a fool, waited until 8:00 P.M. that evening, until some scam low degree attorney called, and said that they would give the corporation back, but he wanted a document, bla, bla, bla. In other words it was a trick to try to buy time and not to give it back.

By now Tony realized he is completely fucked!! He called Bernard's brother, who had the other distribution corporation. Initially his brother did not approve of Bernard's acts, and he hesitated a little, because his brother did not want him to give it back, but ended up signing the stocks over to Tony, even though he later went back to work for Bernard. But that is life!

Tony called all his contacts and decided to be creative. The only good thing he had by now were several customers, and one was a very big company in Brazil called Sadia which was just about to start to operate with Exbrus. So out of nowhere a lot of people showed up. He was able to hire all the people needed and made agreements with other companies to import temporarily for him, on a fee basis.

Tony in action was something to see; he really had the magic. He makes impossible things happen easily. Doing business for him is like dancing. So easy!

Tony set a meeting with PepsiCo, now that he understood what had happened; he asked them to release the payments since all the goods had been delivered to them. Now they owed about five hundred thousand dollars to Exbrus, and out of this money suppliers and taxes had to be paid. Tony explained what happened and proposed to renegotiate with suppliers to pay them in monthly statements. And an incredible coincidence here was that the Taiwan supplier was the one with the highest balance. Initially they agreed to that, although they never believed that Blacker had taken money. Again I think that people believed in the most convenient truth for each situation.

A few days later PepsiCo decided to hold the payment and cancel all future business with Exbrus. Try to understand the situation, Exbrus acquired the goods, did all the transportation, paid the duties to clear customs, paid all local taxes and delivered the goods to PepsiCo. How could they then justify holding up payment in behalf of a supplier? Although they were a worldwide supplier, they had no legal authority over this transaction. And of course when the supplier in question found out what was about happening they did not want to talk to Tony or anyone from Exbrus. And now all of his invoices were to PepsiCo. It's amazing all the politics inside of major corporations. This is another big loss for Tony. PepsiCo was the biggest account at this point, with several orders in place! No need to say that Blacker and Bernard did an excellent job at PepsiCo, since they knew everyone there, and provided all kinds of wrong information in order to secure business from them. They were successful in losing a big client for Exbrus. However, PepsiCo chose to not do business with them either. Well, here at least was a decent decision. When a company delivers the goods and does not receive payments, they can sue the client, although in Brazil nobody dared to do this with a large corporation. But Exbrus' attorneys managed to sue them, and PepsiCo was forced to deposit the money in a trust account held by the government, and now is in the Brazilian justice system, with all the bureaucracy that goes with it. A process like this can take up to ten years to resolve.

By now Tony had made the operations in Miami and Brazil work again, hired new people and companies to import and export the goods and he learned now that the

other Exbrus offices were taking advantage of the situation and everyone wanted to get a piece of Exbrus! They wanted to emulate Blacker and Bernard.

Manny Green (the ex Coca-Cola buyer) was in charge of the new Exbrus Rio de Janeiro office; he also had an additional operation of selling medical equipment at that location. Tony would have authorized payment for all the expenses of the office in Rio for the medical operation as well. Manny got together with the manager of Exbrus Hong Kong and set another operation and he just wanted to walk away without paying anything. After many attempts the Exbrus attorneys were able to negotiate with him. He ended up paying, but took advantage of Tony's weakness.

Blacker and Bernard were calling all the clients now, and telling them that Exbrus had closed down, and they would handle all the business, including paying the suppliers in order to get the business. They went to Komatsu. Exbrus at the time owed Komatsu Miami over one hundred thousand dollars, and they nicely offered to pay it off in order to get their business. The people from Komatsu were among the few clients who knew about Blacker's dishonesty.

Tony published a statement on the front pages of all the major newspapers in Sao Paulo that Blacker and Bernard no longer worked for Exbrus, or were authorized to do any business in Exbrus' name.

He also opened an investigation with the local police in Sao Paulo against Blacker, Bernard and Teresa. Moreover, he had the attorneys prepare several civil suits which languished in the hands of the marvelous Brazilian Justice system moving at a turtle like pace. People in the USA have no idea how wonderful the American justice system is.

Tony now needed to get his properties free in Miami so he could use them to give Komatsu and others guarantees and to extend their debts. According to the Exbrus books, it had been paid all the debts with Pierre LaCosta, who had mortgages on two properties. In fact, Exbrus had paid over one hundred thousand dollars to Pierre. So Tony called Pierre to clear the properties, and he also found that Pierre had opened a corporation in Miami to do business with Blacker and Bernard. Is this a non-stop nightmare or what? And of course Pierre denied it. Tony got really mad and sent an e-mail to Pierre explaining the whole Exbrus story from the beginning to today. Now Tony had a better understanding of what happened and he knew that Pierre was used. He never knew how he got into this mess today and after writing the novel, in about 5 pages would say the following:

Dear Pierre:

I hate novels, but to explain to you what happened, that only now I know, I will have to write one….

Tony explained what happened with Exbrus since he began up to now with less details, of course. He later wrote:

….little by little I began to understand what happened:

Blacker told everyone, literally, that I was crazy and that all money that he sent to Miami I squandered on personal things, and would not pay the suppliers, and Exbrus could not go on like this. In other words, the business was fantastic; the only thing wrong was Tony. We need to take him out of the business.

The plan built by him was fantastic, he was good! I just found out at the last minute! A little more, all of you would have killed me!

Now, Pierre, I have no idea how involved you are in this shit, and honestly at this point I do not want to know, and don't play the innocent guy with me, I already know about the International Import Export, LLC, created January 07, 2004 by you. What a coincidence, ahm?

I already put the local police onto Blacker, Bernard and Teresa and also will file several civil suits against them. I will also go to the Federal Police and I have a dossier in the hands of a good friend of mine who works at Globo TV (the biggest TV network in Brazil) *in case if these don't work it will go on at "Jornal Nacional"* (the 8:00 p.m. TV news).

I will file complaints everywhere! I know a lot of people in lot of countries! No SOB will enter my home and steal from me!

PIERRE, BELIEVE ME! I AM AFRAID OF NOTHING!!!
I HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE!!!
I WILL GO ON WITH THIS TO THE END.
BLACKER IS USING YOU, LIKE HE USED ME,
I KNOW EVERYONE INVOLVED IN THE COUP,
EVEN THE ONES, HIDING BEHIND THE CURTAINS.
I AM SURE THAT YOU WERE NOT ABLE TO STEAL,
YOU ARE AN INTELLIGENT GUY, HAVE A NICE HOME,
HAVE A BEAUTIFUL FAMILY,
I AM SURE YOU WOULD NEVER PUT ALL OF THIS AT RISK!
PIERRE, AT THIS MOMENT I HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE ANY MORE,
SO I BEG YOU, GET OUT OF THIS MESS!
IT WOULD BE HARD TO BE YOUR FRIEND AGAIN,
BUT PLEASE DON'T TURN ME INTO AN ENEMY!
IN THE NAME OF OUR KIDS, DON'T DO THIS I IMPLORE YOU
IN THE NAME OF GOD GET OUT!
I DO NOT WANT TO INVOLVE YOU MORE!
I WANT THE PROPERTIES CLEAR AND FREE IMMEDIATELY!!
IF THIS DOESN'T HAPPEN I WILL INCLUDE YOU ON THE LIST,
AND AT THE END THERE WILL BE SHIT EVERYWHERE!!

AND IN ADDITION I WILL SEND THIS E-MAIL TO EVERYONE IN THE BANKING INDUSTRY, EVERYONE WILL KNOW ABOUT THE TYPES OF DEALS IN WHICH YOU GET INVOLVED!

IF I OWE YOU ANYTHING I WILL PAY EVERY DIME (AS OUR BOOKS SHOWS, WE OVERPAID YOU ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND)

PLEASE GET OUT OF THIS FIGHT; YOUR FAMILY DOES NOT DESERVE THIS!!

I HAVE GIVEN ALL THE CHANCES IN THE WORLD TO BLACKER AND BERNARD AND THEY REFUSED, PLEASE DON'T DO THE SAME MISTAKE!!

PIERRE, GET OUT!!!
I WISH GOD BLESS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY,
I WISH NO HARM TO YOU OR YOUR FAMILY.
JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!
TONY LIMA

Needless to say Tony was very clear in his message to Pierre, convincing him to release all the properties immediately to him, and to stop operating with Blacker and Bernard.

So Tony went on with business and tried to negotiate with a few banks to get credit and bring them in as partners to the business. He met the people at a bank called Farmer's Bank that gave credit to Exbrus. You have to understand the type of clients that Exbrus has. It is a dream come true for most banks to get such clients.

Having had some dealings with the Bank Tony proposed to sell part of the corporation to them. So he set a meeting with the bank CEO and he gets very interested. A few days later he sent a negotiator to purchase the business, sending a message to buy 51% of Exbrus for one million dollars. Thank's God Tony did not take this seriously; later on this bank got involved in one of the biggest scandals in Brazil which involved the local government! Exbrus had almost been involved in this scandal!

The war went on. Now it is Arica, Chile's turn, where they are trying to do the same thing. Exbrus had a local partner who had negotiated with Blacker before. Blacker had tried several times by now, to get the business in Chile for him. Fortunately Tony had stood in the way because he had 51% of the shares. The local partner, a custom broker name Pablo Saconi, had also been manipulated by Blacker, and according to him he had put some money in the business, on the promise that Blacker would pay him back. Now he had used money from his personal clients and was in serious trouble since the law in this country, unlike Brazil, seemed to work. And in addition there were two other minor partners for the business. All the directors were formed by the three partners mentioned, and Tony wanted to remove everyone on the board and reshape the business because at this point it was losing money because of high salaries for the directors.

So Tony hired a local attorney who instructed him what to do and he fired all the local directors. But now the local partner wanted to get out and they wanted to sell their stocks. It seemed this would turn out fine, as their strategy was to keep the business. They always thought that Tony would not be able to pay them back. So they agreed to sell their shares of the corporation, to be paid in four installments, with the stocks as guarantees. If Tony were to fail on one payment, they would take the corporation over. I tell you it was through. Tony had paid over price for the shares, and almost could not pay it off, thanks to the local attorney who became a good friend of Tony's. If it hadn't been for him Tony would have lost this business as well. Today it is this company that has grown most out of the group, and thanks also to Carlos Costa who came, assumed the business and did an outstanding job! He has been there until today. A great warrior!

The nightmare goes on! Tony now found that the person who was the Software Manager, Diego Antunes, who helped Tony to develop the ICO (international Control Operations) created and designed by Tony, had sold the software to Blacker and Bernard. Tony talked to Diego and he confessed and returned all the software fonts. He called on the local police to witness the transaction, since he had done it manipulated by Blacker, so the police could search Bernard and Blacker's offices.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

EXBRUS IS ALIVE!

"Nothing gives one person so much advantage over another as to remain always cool and unruffled under all circumstances"

Thomas Jefferson

Tony hired a new crew to develop the old ICO software in to a newer version and worried about all the rumors that they had planted by now, that Exbrus was closed down, bankrupt, etc. He decided to turn the lights on and show the whole world that the Exbrus Corporation was alive and well. So he hired a new crew to write a newer version of the software in a record time.

Until now Tony had been low profile in regards to the business, it was always Marcos Paz and Blacker who appeared in press issues, as a matter of fact all business cards had no titles. Tony always believed that everyone was a part of the business. It was the big belief that the company was built from the foundation by the employees, customer and Exbrus in that order of importance. Tony decided to change this order, so from this day on the company will be formed by Exbrus, clients and employees. Employees you could replace and you could always bring in new customers, but to create a name takes years. You cannot replace it! (Think of this!)

So, from now on he would change his position from low profile to a very high profile, none of this hiding anymore. He was the founder and president, and for sure he would let the world know this!

Tony needed a name for the software and here comes his creative imagination: the slogan of the company is if it is Fast! It must be Exbrus! So his decision to name it e-fast, had a lot to do with it. And does it! The e-fast was born (Exbrus Corporation Trade Operations System) which is an operation system to manage all trading and stocks management online, real time, by Internet, all created by Exbrus Corporation.

Business was good and things were happening. Sadia now was the best client, although they had not placed a contract yet, but a lot of business came from them and other customers as well.

Remember the money Tony had lent to his friend Albert Santos? This is the money that helped him to go on in this time.

Here we go again! Tony prepared this mega event for the launch of the new software! He invited more than 2,000 people (he wants to have 500 at the event), finds a place, prepares it with a Chinese decoration, hires 20 hostess, all dressed as Chinese

woman, gets 20 notebooks with wireless technology for demonstration, brings souvenirs from China, and hires 20 computer technicians. Tony was unbelievable when it came to events. He has such magic. Everything happened perfectly and he was so professional.. He chose March 08, for two reasons; he believed in numerology and when you add all the numbers for this date you get number 8, and in Chinese that number is power and money, and second it is his father's birthday as well.

So his plan was to introduce the new software to customers, suppliers and competitors, as well as the press, and make a tribute to his father, which he did with his permission. It would be a tribute to his father and liberation as well, to send a message to everyone that was trying to get him down. (Tony's ideas)

Before the event he made a partnership with NNR in Frankfurt, Germany and now Exbrus had an office in Europe as well, since most of the Sadia suppliers were from Europe. He hired a new manager for Hong Kong and brought him over for the event. Tony made sure to bring everyone. The idea was: we are alive and well; as a matter of fact, we have never been better!

March 08, 2004 – Time flies now, and boy that went fast, and Tony was able to do everything, everybody was made part of that; the people from the software worked 24 hours in order to make it on time.

He hired a famous TV sports anchor to be the master of ceremony speaker at the event that introduces Tony.

Tony made a brief speech about Exbrus, how he got up to here, and thanked everyone who helped through the process and then Sandra (his sister) made a presentation of the e-fast, together with the software people.

And after that he made a Tribute to Mr. Lima as follows:

In addition to the launching of e-fast, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute a very special person, in fact, my best friend.

This New Year's Eve was very special to me, because this friend of mine had a heart attack; right on December 31 of last year and I spent the New Year's Eve at his side, celebrating life!!!

For a second it came in to my mind what it was to lose this best friend of mine; I tell you, it was a big shock

This friend of mine that I know for almost 44 years here and maybe even longer in other dimensions, this friend that I am proud to be my father, Ulysses Lima.

Dad, my best friend, I want to thank you for all the things that you have done for me, especially:

- ✓ *For all the education;*
- ✓ *To teach me to dream;*
- ✓ *To teach me to have no fear;*
- ✓ *To let me free;*
- ✓ *To give me the incentive to go to the agriculture school;*
- ✓ *To give me the incentive to be independent;*
- ✓ *To teach me to be innovator and pioneer;*
- ✓ *Te teach me to drive;*
- ✓ *For loaning the family car when I started Exbrus, and stayed car less;*
- ✓ *To come to work with me;*
- ✓ *To teach me to take all chances;*

- ✓ *To give me all support when I immigrated to the USA;*
- ✓ *For being this fireman father, who blew off some fires I started;*
- ✓ *To teach me to love what you do (our work, profession);*
- ✓ *And much more to teach me the meaning of the word INTEGRITY;*
- ✓ *Dad, life has no price, because to live is higher than our own imagination;*
- ✓ *It is my wish that I can teach my children all the good things you taught me, especially the meaning of the word INTEGRITY;*

And for a coincidence today this friend of mine is getting to be 71 years young;
Happy birthday to you!

Everyone was very moved with the tribute to Mr. Lima. How many would not like to say that to your father? How many haven't done it yet?

Tony did it again! His message was loud and clear and published in all parts of the world. The Exbrus Corporation has never been so alive! As a matter of fact, it has never been growing so fast!

But still there was a lot to do yet; he needed to get all the import licenses for his Brazilian corporation, and to stop outsourcing to others and in addition he needed a company with registered high capital, because that was one of the several Brazilian customs requirements to be able to handle high volumes of export and import.

In one of the meetings with the consulting companies that he had hired to revise all the paperwork for all Brazilian corporations, he asked if anyone knew of any company with a registered capital high, because he wanted to acquire one. Tony's big dream was to open the capital of the Exbrus Corporation and have it listed on Wall Street. When he finished the question one of the guys asked, *"Would it be OK if the company was listed on the Bovespa (Stock Market of Sao Paulo)?"* Tony obviously opened a wide smile and said yes. So the guy said that he would bring more information on the company. Those are the moments when all of a sudden things start to make sense and that's how Tony felt at this very moment; everything suggested that he was going in the right direction.

A few days later Tony signed the contract and acquired the Bovespa Company with a registered capital of about two and half million dollars. Tony then established a new plan; he would make this company operational because it was a shell company, and had not been used for past few years. He would merge it with the Brazilian and Chilean Corporations, then the stocks were going to be offered for sale (he bought 99.9% of the stocks) that would be the only way to pay the approximately two million dollars of bills left. He always had in mind of bringing in a partner but with a public company now, it would be very easy, and make it very transparent. This type of business in Brazil was considered not very serious; Exbrus would be the first corporation in foreign commerce to be listed in Brazil. And there was no doubt in his mind about the concept he created, the End-to-End concept created by the Exbrus Corporation, was the perfect formula for success and was a truly win-win formula.

In the meantime Tony also got to know some people from the government of the state of Minas Gerais, who invited Exbrus to participate in a logistics project at the Airport of Belo Horizonte; this was a major airport created few years ago, and was un operational, and they wanted to reactivate it.

Tony then created the project *"Take off Minas Gerais",* a logistic project for distribution based in Belo Horizonte, with taxes incentives. The idea also was brilliant; the city was located at the center of all capitals of Brazil. It really would

make sense. Of course he would need money to activate the project, but since now he had a publicly listed corporation he thought that would be easy!

I think that Tony was so determined to get the money to pay the old corporation bills, and with all his marketing strategies, we have to admit, the guy is good! That also busted his ego, and he forgot to care about the day-to-day operation and several problems started to appear; all employees were new, and were not used to the way that Exbrus had been in the past, where Tony had slowly trained them one by one. The client list was long and there was no problem getting the initial business, but maintaining it was getting to be very difficult. His sister Sandra was running the Sao Paulo office, but she also did not have any experience, although she did have the will to work but made several mistakes in the management of people. Management and leadership skills do not come easy.

The next target was to create an event in Hong Kong, advertising the End-to-End concept (a concept created by Exbrus) in order to provide Trade Finance, Exbrus acquires the merchandise, transports, makes all the payments of all relevant duties and taxes and delivers the goods at the final destination, invoicing in that country's local currency, something never done before. And he also would try to attract a Chinese company to be part of Exbrus Brazilian listed corporation, and they could re launch the stocks in Brazil; for sure it would be a great success!

I believe this visionary side of Tony was hard for most people to understand; it seems that he looked too far into the future and instead of believing some times, they get scared that it was too good to be true. What do you think?

Tony was looking now for a professional well known in the market to be the president of Exbrus Brazil; actually he wanted to make it Exbrus South America, after the merger, and give it the exclusive rights to operate with the brand name *"Exbrus"* in all South America. For this he needed someone well known worldwide, who had been a president of a major corporation.

Let's stop for a second here again; the guy never did it in his life, he had no idea, yet he acted like he knows all that stuff. Where does he get all this information?

So he talked to a lot of people; everyone was thrilled with the idea, but when push came to shove they got scared.

Tony called the reporter from *"Gazeta Mercantil"* and explained his idea; he got it published on the front page as follows:

EXBRUS, from the US, to go public in Brazil

The American Exbrus is going public in Brazil. For that purpose, Exbrus purchased a corporation formed in 1993, the name of which has not been released, and will be amended so to encompass Exbrus' operations in South America. The expectation of Exbrus founder and President, Tony Lima, is that the transfer of the South American assets to the new public company should occur by November.

When Tony got to the office his phone was flooded with calls; he had no idea it would make the front page. And he said, *"YES, I got it*!" It's amazing once thing appears on paper, how it becomes reality! Several others articles were published in several newspapers and magazines in Brazil.

With all the publicity, he got the attention of the ex-president of Tiger Airlines – Martin Bologna, who accepted the invitation to work with Exbrus. He initially would

come as a consultant and would become the new president for Exbrus South America. Tony could not contain his happiness; everything was working as planned.

He called everyone for a meeting and this day he almost cried when he released the news about Bologna coming to the company. For him that was a very big accomplishment, and he was thinking everything will work.

As Bologna came to work he liked everything he saw, but didn't think that this was the time to go in to the stock market.

See, this is the thing. Brazilians have no understanding about the great concept of listing a corporation. In Brazil only 300 companies are listed, and Exbrus was one of them. In the past several scandals in the stock market left everyone with a bad taste in their mouths. So when you talk about going public, there is no way!

After hearing all the negativity he gave up the idea of going in the stock market now, but he worried; he still needed to find a way to pay the old Exbrus bills. He could not hold that anymore, and it was affecting his credit on the USA. Although by now a lot of attorneys in the USA had recommended him to file for bankruptcy, but when he remembered his last experience, he got a chill, as the name Exbrus and his credibility was so important to him, and he wanted to pay everybody off, even though he was robbed. But how could he pay if he did not have money?

So he still planned to go on with the event in Hong Kong hoping he could convince a Chinese company to be his partner for now. And he had a great instinct about this large Hong Kong Company that he would try to bring. And his second target was to advertise the End-to-End concept, so if he could bring other companies to apply his concept it would certainly give Exbrus credibility.

Now tell me, how many people do you know, who want to share their concepts, and still think that they will benefit! Tony for sure was visionary, no doubt about that!

In his travels from Miami to Sao Paulo, he wrote a movie script for a cartoon to show the End-to-End concept and he called Sergio Nakamura (the video guy) to help him to create this cartoon showing how people and companies could benefit from the concept, and he also redid the Exbrus DVD presentation. Think of any major company presentation. That was how the Exbrus presentation was, it was so good that after you viewed it you had to wait a few seconds to grasp everything you just saw and heard! I mean that!

He traveled to Hong Kong two weeks prior to the date of the event; nothing was done yet, he needed to find a place, to hire the buffet, sound people, hostesses, etc. Again, for a regular guy that would be impossible, but not for Tony.

On the plane he drew out a plan to approach this Hong Kong company called LiFung. He had known those guys through Coca-Cola; they were the company that does all sourcing for lots of major corporations, the only thing that they don't have is the logistics management, and the End-to-End concept will make them the biggest sourcing company on the planet. He was sure about that. But how to get those guys' attention? In prior times he had meetings with them, and they were afraid of Exbrus (believe or not) competing with them and taking business away, but that never ever was Tony's idea; he just wanted to show the End-to-End concept and its advantages.

He sent an e-mail to Anna Paola and told her about the event and invited her to come, and to Tony's surprise she accepted. So she came with Sergio Nakamura and Sylvio Costa. Tony was flying now, he felt like Superman. To be in Hong Kong, the city he loved, and together with Bella, there was nothing better in the world.

I am sure you have loved, or are in love right now; you know the power of love is the highest emotion we have on earth. When someone is in love the world is more colorful, life becomes so bright and you can see that in the lovers by just looking at them.

Tony hired 20 models to host the event; he really wanted to make a point and we know by now what women mean to him. This time he invited all the logistics companies, target clients and Trade Finance people. He chose the old Chinese market, converted it to a restaurant, giving the place an ancient Chinese look; he helped to design uniforms for the hostesses and the decoration was Chinese and Brazilian. He brought Brazilian souvenirs and coffee as well. He invited the Brazilian ambassador to speak at the event.

Meanwhile he tried everything with the people of LiFung, from managers to the CEO and president, and nothing; they did not even talk to him. And I mean the guy tried every way possible. I guess the door is closed for now, he thought.

November 18, 2004 – Trading with Brazil, Hong Kong

As usual everything was perfect; Tony was so happy that more than 300 people showed up to the event. Bella helped him in everything and motivated him so much.

Some times it's the small things that make the difference. Right before his speech, Bella called Tony aside and gave him this small pocket book, and asked him to open to a page; he opened and then she read a motivational message for him. Those are the little things that make Tony really happy.

On stage he started to speak in Chinese, nobody could understand how this Western guy could speak Chinese, but that was only for a few minutes He had prepared a welcome speech in Chinese, and everyone applauded and from that point on he really got the attention of everyone. He made the presentation of Exbrus and the End-to-End concept with the cartoon, and closed the presentation with some Brazilian samba dancers. It was wonderful!

Upon his return to Brazil things started to go wrong again, Exbrus lost Sadia, their biggest client at the time, because of some stupid contract that a bank wanted to have, and got into a disagreement with the Legal Department, which recommended that they should not do business with Exbrus. Since Tony had been out a sales lady, Carmen handled it. Although she had the best intention at the time, she made a lot of mistakes, not explaining correctly to the legal department how the End-to-End concept would work.

On top of this Martin Bologna, using some excuses about needing to work on a government contract, just stopped coming in to the office and later quit. But there were still a lot of new projects coming and Tony plunged ahead.

It is December, 2004 now; Tony was seeing Anna Paola and invited her to a spiritual therapy group. When they were returning from the place, Tony received a call from Sandra that their father has had another heart attack. This time he needed major bypass surgery, but everything went well and Tony kidded with Mr. Lima, *"Are you liking the idea of every year ending at the hospital?"*

Carmen managed to get few very important clients in Brazil with some mining companies, CRVD & PAB, and a supplier from an ex-Russian republic, Belarus, a manufacturer of off road tires, but they required payment in advance in order to

manufacture the tires. The representative for the Russian supplier saw in the End-to-End of Exbrus the solution to provide the tires to these mining companies. Tony initially didn't like the deal, in other times he would just reject it, but under the currency scenario, he had to take a careful look.

At this point Tony already had sold everything he could, and had invested all the money to try to revive Exbrus. After all, Exbrus was his big dream, was everything he had and a dream does not die ever! He would never give up; he would keep trying to the end. Nobody was going to take this away from him.

It's March, 2005 and everything at Exbrus is on an emergency basis; things are getting really bad. Tony, by coincidence, met a Japanese guy, Taku Moto, ex-director of a Brazilian bank, with lots of experience with credit. Tony briefed him on the situation and he agreed to come and help. At this point Tony accepted help from anyone.

His birthday was coming up and Tony's head was going crazy, he was running out of options. He needed to go to Hong Kong to follow some leads as well, and he wanted to take one week off to get away. Who knows how some idea came to mind.

He once more told Sharon he wanted a divorce, and that he wanted to start a new life on his birthday, and he thought that what was still wrong with him was he wanted to get out of this relationship.

Once more he called Anna Paola to come with him; he wanted to surprise her and tell her that he finally got out of his relationship. And he wanted to go to India for a week with Bella to visit the Taj Mahal. So she accepted.

In Hong Kong Sharon suspected that Tony is with her, and kept calling her parents' house. Anna Paola found out and got really upset with that, and then Tony told her that he was willing to stay with her and I believe that she got scared. She realized that being with Tony had a high price, and she was not sure that she wanted to go on. So at his birthday dinner she started crying saying that it was over, and the next day she asked to return and this time, Tony let her go.

Tony, very sad now, changed his plan to go to Bali, Indonesia for a week hoping to find a lot of single people so he could have fun. When he arrived there he learned that it was Japan's school vacation and there were a lot of families at the resort. So he started to think that maybe his destiny was to stay with Sharon, since Bella had walked away. So he decided once more to return to Sharon and would try to conquer her again. He would try to make his relationship work.

And Taku was the person who made it happen! In little time, in less than 60 days Exbrus had all kinds of credit in Brazil, thanks to his expertise and know how! If it hadn't been for Taku, Exbrus would have closed its doors by now. However, interest rates were very high, we are talking about 36% per year (that's Brazil) but Tony would believe that some miracle would happen, because so many had happened in the past, and somehow he was able to pay it. Taku also brought a few people to work in the Sales Department, some really good contacts.

In the past Tony had had some good experience with Japanese people. Remember the restaurant, and later on some Japanese clients at a Ford dealer, and his father's best friend had been a Japanese guy as well. So Tony felt very comfortable with this community coming to help him.

Taku was very similar to Tony, he was fast on decisions and stubborn as hell, so it did not take much before he got into a disagreement with Tony. Since he felt that he saved the company, he proposed to Tony that he wanted 50% of Exbrus to stay on, and

it's amazing everyone wanted to get Exbrus, but didn't want to pay for it, thought Tony – and told him to take a hike.

By this time Taku had the operation of the Russian tires approved and Tony now needed to go to Belarus to visit the supplier and get the contract, so he could pay them.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE CRASH!

"Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up"

Thomas A. Edison

Now the story keeps repeating itself! One of the target clients for Exbrus was Electrolux, which really liked the End-to-End concept and they were about to begin operations with Exbrus. Taku and Carmen were negotiating with Electrolux that, which was working with a competitor of Exbrus. If Exbrus could get the business they would be out, and that was their big account. It would be a big loss for this competitor. When Taku left Exbrus he called the competitor and told them the whole story and offered to help and told them to hire Carmen, who was the best sales person Tony had ever had and had been with him for years. She was the consummate professional.

Carmen was now aware of the Exbrus challenges and Tony already had told her several times that she should find another job, because he could not guarantee how long he would be able to hang on, but she refused and wanted to stay. So Taku introduced her to the competitor and they made a plan of taking over Exbrus as well. The idea was to hire Carmen, but she would continue to work at Exbrus and give them all the information, so they could acquire Exbrus.

Tony was the only one who knew that Exbrus was completely broke now; everything outside looked great, but inside it was tearing apart! And like I said before people always believe what they see.

So Carmen accepted the offer, and influenced Tony to hire one of the directors of the competitor, and of course, Tony had no idea of the plans and hired the guy, whom he had already met. This Harry Namata, another Japanese guy, ex-director of General Motors, Valmet and Case, was a well-known person on the market, with a lot of contacts. He immediately accepted Tony's proposal to come to work, and his strategy was to work for Exbrus under the command of the competitor, so they could acquire Exbrus.

Harry arrived and quickly gained Tony's total trust; he tried to become his friend and pretended to be the greatest guy on earth! Carmen would stop bringing in new orders. She was a very good professional, every week she would close a new client. Suddenly she stopped; Tony thought that maybe Harry would help to overcome Exbrus' current situation, and little did he know he had other plans as well.

But in fact he really helped, since this time his intention was to buy the business and not destroy it; of course they wanted to do it at the lowest cost possible. So he brought new people as well, and lots of projects came with it.

Tony needed to go to Belarus to visit the tire supplier and get the contract; he already had a loan on the mining companies.

Before he went Tony asked the person who represented this supplier in Brazil to come with him, but he couldn't make it and assured Tony that he could talk to the people in Belarus.

When Tony arrived in Belaz, Belarus the first thing he did was to go to the US Embassy to get a referral on this supplier. Much to his surprise the people in the embassy told him that they do not support any American company to do business with any Belarus company. This was because it seems that in Belarus they are not serious, and just a few people make decisions here, and normally it is for their advantage only.

Tony had no other options; this was the only business he had at the moment, so he asked for some attorney referrals and got it from the Embassy.

Next he tried to set an appointment with the supplier that initially would not talk to him but only to their Brazilian representative, so Tony had a long talk over the phone trying to explain what goes on, and finally they accepted. At the meeting Tony explained Exbrus' role in this transaction and the End-to-End concept, where that would be the only way they would be able to do business, on their requirement of advanced payment. He also explained that he had no intention of by passing their representative in Brazil, as the Exbrus job was to provide the trade finance, and manage the entire logistics process. He explained in order to pay in advance; the contract must be in Exbrus' name, otherwise he could not do the transfer. So after two hours they seemed to understand. Tony agreed to new terms, and they were supposed to get meeting notes and send them to everyone, and as long as their representative in Brazil approved they would do as Tony suggested. But Tony made sure that he would only wire transfer the funds once his local attorney received the contract signed by them.

After that Tony called the local press in Belaz, Belarus and convinced a reporter from a local newspaper to publish an article about the recent transaction. His intention was to send a message to the Belarus supplier; if they messed up with him, he would go to the press with it, and for sure would not look good for them. So he thought.

The following is the article heading translated into English:

American middleman of BELAZ

By Dmitry Zajats

The President and founder of EXBRUS Corporation, Mr. Tony Lima, visited Belarus last week. The company that he is a head of is dealing with the supply of products to the countries of South America. The visit of the American businessman was concerning the interest of Brazilian mining companies to "BELSHINA" (Bobrujsk) and "BELAZ".

And Tony also made sure that the most important related Trade Finance Magazine knew about this, and they published it as well. The following is the article heading published in the Trade Finance Magazine, London, England:

EXBRUS supports Belarus-Brazil trade

Exbrus, a trade finance and logistics Management Company, is facilitating the export of heavy-duty trucks and tires from firms in Belarus to mining concerns in Brazil.

Now let's talk about this Joe Blow representative of the Belarus tire supplier. This guy became a friend of the Belarus consul in Brazil who got him the representation. He tried to sell directly to the mining companies and nobody advanced money, so he found Exbrus. That not only helped him to make the deal, but also by now was advancing his future commissions, as he was complaining that he had expended lots of money to get this transaction done, and he needed to get some money now. Tony had agreed to that and approved the advance payment to him. He had told Tony that the re negotiations on the deal would be impossible with the Russians, and naturally Tony got this done!

So Tony returned to Brazil and celebrated, as he got it the way he wanted. But now Joe Blow got very upset and was afraid that Tony would take the representation away from him, and obviously Tony got into his EGO (especially with all articles published in the press). And he now did not agree with Tony's proposal, and changed the contract to his company's name. We are talking about someone who has no assets, no credit history, no background, in a transaction over two million dollars.

So now the Belarus people made the contract with Joe Blow's Company and wanted Exbrus to pay it. Tony would not accept it, because this guy's reputation obviously was not good, and once the goods were released out of the factory he would be the legal owner of the goods, and he could take possession of them, and Tony knew the outcome of that.

Meanwhile, Harry Namata helped Tony to get additional credit for new orders from other mining companies as well, to acquire tires from the same supplier in Belarus. All Tony needed to do was OK it and it was approved, by a Brazilian bank, but Tony put it on hold for now.

Harry also advised that the people from Mitsui (one of the biggest Japanese logistics operators) were interested in purchasing Exbrus. This was part of the plan they had put together. So thinking this was a serious proposition, and Tony was so happy to see a future, he hired a company referred by Bill Fisher to do due diligence and an evaluation of the business, and finally to put a business proposal together.

Tony tried by all means to make the people from Belarus redo the contract in Exbrus' name, but this time they wouldn't deal at all!

By now all the money that Exbrus got in this deal has been spent on old interest charges and suppliers that were threatening to sue Exbrus. If Tony could get the contract done correctly, he may be able to survive with the new orders that he got, because this was a very profitable transaction, as the risk was high!

His attorney was trying to talk to the Belarus supplier people but had no success. A few days later his attorney in Belarus informed him that one of his final customers from Brazil was in Belarus with Joe Blow and the supplier sold all the tires available to this client.

You must understand that about this time there was a shortage on the market of these tires as China's demands had increased. In the middle of this Joe Blow convinced one of the Exbrus customers to bypass Exbrus and get all the tires direct

from the supplier, so that way he would be the only who had those type of tires in Brazil. This was business all right! It was like one vulture eating the other one alive!

So Tony now was tired of this mess; this had become a no end story. He wanted to renegotiate with the bank or close the doors. That is it! *"I can't handle it any more,"* he proclaimed. So he talked to specialized attorneys in Brazil and most of the attorneys said not to do anything, since the note would be due in another 60 days; they suggested waiting until the due date, asking for an extension, and only then trying to negotiate with the banks. But Tony felt that he should try to negotiate now!

One of the interesting things was that Tony, most of his life, had learned everything by himself; he never had a coach so he really trusted good books, good cassettes, and good seminars, and he tried to apply all that seemed to be good for him, and of course that made sense to him. So by now he got the book *"Think & Grow Rich"* by Napoleon Hill (you must read this book, I also read it). This book was like the cassettes tapes from Tom Hopkins to him, for the first time he got a book based on real life research about all the most successful guys who ever lived, like Thomas Edison, Abraham Lincoln, Henry Ford, and Andrew Carnegie among many others. Also it showed you in a very simple way all the secrets (that is no secret) and how to get it. And the most interesting thing was the relation between love and sex that he never heard before. Everything made so much sense to him now. And he thought that was because his relationship had been bad, and when this happened for sure everything goes wrong in your life. He learned the meaning of what they say about a woman can either make or break him, which loves comes and goes whenever it pleases. And the most amazing thing, the mystery of sex transmutation; that was a big one for him since he had never heard of it. I love sex! How come I never learned this before, he thought.

So once more he talked to Sharon, and once again he talked to her about his intention to divorce, as he was not happy with her; he had tried everything, and nothing worked and that he had no one (and this time he did not have anybody), and again Sharon went into crisis mode.

So right after that, out of the blue he met this girl from Curitiba, state of Parana named Adriane and he became *"Don Juan"* again and everything seemed to go in synchronism again, and he was thinking that maybe she could be the one. He very badly needed someone to be by his side, as he felt so lost at this point. So he dedicated himself to her, and at one point in their dating she suggested that he see a Brazilian movie called *"Francisco's Children"* based on a real life story of how this country duet got to be one of the most successful country singers in Brazil. Just like him they were born on a farm, very similar to his own. The music that was playing when they first met *("How are you," from Roberto Carlos)* was the main theme song of the movie. And now he really was thinking that she was it! He got so emotional that he laughed to the point of tears.

Adriane Ramos was Brazilian born of German descent, 29 years old, she hosted a TV and Radio show at the local network, extremely beautiful, brown eyes, hard worker and very energetic.

Tony found a kind of renaissance with Adriane; she really motivated him and he now decided to talk to this specific bank and he did not accept any more loans from any other banks. He had an idea that might work, as this bank could be the partner he had always looked for, and he firmly believed that he could convince these people to be partners of Exbrus and he had all the evaluation and due diligence done by now by his

consultant, Julian Soto. That would be the perfect solution; he assigned the Exbrus stocks and they could have total financial control, and he could do what he knows best, bringing in new clients and developing new projects for Exbrus!

Tony set the meeting with the bank and brought along Harry Namata and Julian Soto. The meeting was set for 6:00 P.M. and Tony prepared his best Exbrus presentation. There was one presentation he would bet his life on, this would the one. He was prepared!

If course the only thing that this naïve guy did not know was that this was not in the interest of Harry Namata and the people behind him, and just like Blacker in the past this guy manipulated the bank people as well as Julian Soto, providing them with the wrong information. And telling them that this was the worst business he ever saw in his life!

Tony made his best performance ever; he was super motivated. There were three directors of the bank, who carefully listened to the whole of Tony's presentation. At the end they said, *"Where is our money, and by the way please sign this document here*", as this transaction was done by Taku Moto, and the proper paperwork was not signed by him. Tony could not believe it, it was like doing a presentation to the walls. At least he did not sign anything! As that was their mistake!

Right about this time Tony received an invitation to be a speaker at the 8th Annual Structured Trade & Export Finance in the Americas Conference in Miami. Remember the article published in London? Because of that article he got invited to speak at this major event on Trade Finance in the world. We are talking about just very specialized and well known people get invited to speak at such an event.

Tony tried everything possible to make a settlement with the bank; he offered the house in Miami and the current building property in Brazil, although the Miami property was titled under Gary Noble's name, he spoke with Gary and he agreed to release the property to the bank as he never wanted a guarantee from Tony. He trusted and knew Tony's capacity! And all the bank wanted to talk about was the settlement of just one of the operations of PAB Mining, which belonged to the bank. For this transaction they would do any negotiation and accept anything, but Tony wanted to negotiate everything. Later on he discovered that according to the Central Bank of Brazil's regulations they couldn't do this transaction with PAB Mining, and that's why they wanted to negotiate this note so badly!

The only advantage Tony had at this point was the whole transaction had been done by Taku Moto, and by now Tony learned that this guy was a specialized crook in getting bank loans; he would do it on an irregular basis, bribing the people of course. And Tony had no idea about his background once more. When is this guy going to learn?

Tony brought his children and Sharon back to Jaguariuna. Sharon became completely desperate now and she wanted a house. Tony had no way to get it, but again he had another coincidence. He meets an old college friend, who insisted on selling his house, giving him 90 days to pay if off. He bought the home but had no idea how he was going to pay his friend off!

The relationship he started with Adriane finished the same way it started: fast! And Tony saw his world fell apart once more. This never ends, he thought. But he couldn't stop. He had to go on!

So he lay off all employees in Sao Paulo as the bank by now asked Exbrus Brazilian Corporation for bankruptcy. He closed the Miami office down, filed for bankruptcy in

the USA, once more, and also closed the Hong Kong office as well. He was really upset seeing all this go!

He talked to Gary Nobel and he agreed to sell the house in Miami and paid for the house he just bought in Jaguariuna. (Is this guy a friend or what?)

Chile was by now the only office left. The good news was that this office was growing very fast, and since in Arica is the only place Exbrus has a logistics operation, and it has no link to the other corporations. He managed to settle Sharon and his children in Jaguariuna, and made sure they have everything possible.

He rented an apartment in Arica, Chile and he intended to live there, and run the Chilean Corporation, as this was the only option he had left. Once more he invited Anna Paola to spend a weekend with him in Arica; she came and for sure this relationship also had ended.. There was no more synchronism!

Tony had one last business to do with his good friend and client Davie Palumbo, as he gave to Tony all the import logistics of a large operation he had with Nestle in Brazil. Tony dedicated his best on this operation, as this also would be a profitable transaction for him, and even knowing his current status Davie had trusted him!

Everything was set, the goods arrived in Arica and he hired people to do the job for him. It should be no problem. So he sent the first shipment to Brazil. On the day the goods arrived in Brazil, the Brazilian Customs Department issued a new law, that from that day on established a minimum value for customs to base the taxes, and this value stipulated by customs was ten times higher than the true value of the goods. Tony again felt completely lost and did not have the strength to go on. He gave the operation back to his friend, as he did not feel capable anymore knowing that he would have to lose more money and time by giving it back.

Well, this is the end! I guess it could get worse! But does that make you feel better? Poor Tony - he is lost by now!

Tony had a meeting with Carlos Costa and Alexandre Smith (directors of Exbrus Arica); and he told them that he did not feel good, he could not go on like this; he wanted to take some time off and he said: *"My life today seems to be like this. If I die today, it would be perfect, not that I want to do such a thing, but I am tired of fighting like crazy and get nowhere!"*

Tony had one last mission: He had accepted an invitation to speak at the Miami Conference, and chances are something that Tony doesn't let go by, he takes all chances, always hoping that there will be a miracle waiting for him because he believed a dream never ever dies!

His plans are: he will go to the seminar, he will employ whatever force he has left, and he will do the best he could at this conference and after that he would go to Hong Kong and after that, India; his old dream that for a long time and now was calling strongly to him, somehow.

He stopped at a local book store and bought the book *"The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari"* by Robin S. Sharma and he had in his briefcase a book he bought some time ago, but never had chance to read called, *"The Spirituality of Success: Getting Rich with Integrity"* by Vincent M. Roazzi and he intended to read both of these books on his trip.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

INDIA & REBORN

"The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness
is the attribute of the strong"

Mahatma Gandhi

New Delhi, India – Wow! He was amazed at everything. What a mess! What a dirty place! Crazy traffic! People everywhere! How can people actually like India?

His hotel was near the railway station, and what a mess! He took a day tour in New Delhi and later on at the hotel he met lots of tourists. Tony easily made friends and especially with a couple that he heard talking in Portuguese, and he approached them and invited them to go with him to the Taj Mahal over 100 miles away.

They traveled by bus to the Taj Mahal and when he arrived he was so impressed; it reminded him of his first look at Las Vegas. You had to see it with your own eyes, there were no words to describe the place, the energy that surrounded it, was unbelievable. He did not want to get out! He had lots of fun with the Brazilian couple, who he truly befriended.

A couple of days later the Brazilian couple returned and he went to visit the "Golden Temple" at Amristar 300 miles away. He traveled by train and again came to know that India was something astonishing, somehow the people managed to live a perfect harmony. With all the crazy traffic and a foot on the accelerator and a hand on the horn, they are still happy. During his stay he never saw anyone fighting in the traffic conditions, and the reason for that was everywhere. They managed to live in peace. The symbol of the horn for most Western people is *"get away"* and in India it is, *"I am here"* and the horn signal is considered a good thing. He noticed that all of the trucks had on the back bumper, *"horn please."*

The Golden Temple was not a tourist attraction built for Westerners but a temple built in 1589 AD. It is the center of the Sikh religion. Like Mecca, Benaras, and Jerusalem for Muslims, Hindus, Christians and Jews, Amritsar is a revered city for Sikhs. But what is the most impressive is the fact that they have hundreds of *"gurus"* praying twenty four hours a day seven days a week. The energy in this place is something out of this world, for sure. As an expression of their humanity they offer free food to around 20,000 people every day.

He returned to Delhi, where he got sick to his stomach and ended up at the local hospital. He needed to rest for a few days on a very light diet. He locked himself into his hotel room, no TV, no radio, no nothing and started to reflect about his life; he also

started to read, *"The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari"* and bingo! He could not believe what he was reading; this is a fable about a lawyer who had a heart attack, went to India and changed his life. What a coincidence. He knew he didn't have a heart attack, but for sure would have it, if he kept going at that pace. Everything started to make sense; the book made a profound change in Tony. And he feels that he was at the right place and at the right time. All of a sudden the changes naturally started to happen. He started to realize the true value of life, which he had forgotten for some time now. He sent an e-mail to Sharon once again re confirming that he wanted to end their marriage as their mission together had been accomplished.

He decided to travel to Mumbai (old Bombay) and now he read the second book, *"The Spirituality of Success…."* And boy, everything made so much sense to him; it seemed that those books were tailor made for him. Vincent M. Roazzi, the author, showed in an easy way to understand that success is not a logical thing, that there is no quick fix and it is up to us and only to us to make the change. Tony followed his trip to Calangute, state of Goa and he was now at Baga Beach on the Arabian Sea.

So synchronism happened again in Tony's life, but this time he didn't need anyone, or anything to make it happen; he was centered now; he got himself. He realized that he had to see happiness through his own eyes, not through somebody else's, or based on other *"things."* He decided to become **REBORN!**

He decided to change his life; without notice he became a vegetarian, something completely unacceptable to him in the past, and he felt great with it. Some intuition told him that he knew this would happen some day.

He decided to throw away his big material dreams; he didn't want to lose energy on big material things anymore. He wanted to live the small things of life; because he knows for sure the big things will come true at the right time!

His main goals from now on will be based on little things like: awakening before sunrise, to go for a walk every day, to do yoga, to dance s few times a week, meditate every day for half an hour and most important of all, to concentrate on managing his days in perfect synchronism with the universe. Somehow he knows this will happen! He believed that his destiny was already written! And it was up to him to find a better way to follow it, this is his free will!

The time went by so quickly. He really enjoyed his days of perfect harmony in India. He regained some incredible new energy and after some time he decided to write to the people at Exbrus in Arica, Chile. He sent a passionate e-mail:

I have been resting for some time now in India, at Calangute, state of Goa at the Baga beach on the Arabic Sea, a place heavily influenced by the Portuguese since the early 1500's.

Except for the technology India still is the same country it was when the Portuguese arrived hundreds of years ago.

Every day I walked on the beach and always I see these ancient looking fishing boats. The interesting moment comes when they take the boat out of the water. The fishermen tie a rope to the bow, and they get as many as 50 people, depending on the size of the boat, put some rolling pieces of wood under the hull, and everyone pulled the boat out of the water. Many times I ended up helping them as I walked the beach.

You may be asking what that has got to do with anything. Well, I see a lot of similarity in our work. A, fisherman alone could never get the boat out of the water; he only succeeds when everyone pulls together, and sometimes the added strength of one

person can make a big difference. This is what I see at Exbrus! We only can go on if everyone is helping. And of course, no need to say that everyone must pull it in the same direction. Some people could work for two, temporarily, but not at all the time and we never would be able to do the work of three people and so on.

And that makes me to think about each one of you, and how important each one is in the process, regardless of your position, be you the person who cleans, or drives the forklift, or answers the phone, or takes care of the accounting, or who sells or who manages. If it wasn't the force of everyone together we never could go anywhere! And I want to take this moment to thank everyone for all your work, all your dedication, all your creativity, all your thoughts, all your motivation, all your sweat and your will! Without this we could never get where we are today! And look how much we have grown in such a little time, and we keep growing, and I am sure we will grow even more.

I would like also to take this opportunity to ask everyone to forgive me for any acts, words our gestures that some how offended anyone. I believe that a true man is the one who assumes his mistakes, and learns from it, and follows his path, and once more I would like to apologize to all: I am sorry for my mistakes.

Soon I will be back, with a motivation and inspiration level you probably had never seen before. Never in my life have I been so determined to make this company a great success! But for that, just like the fishermen, I can not do it alone; I need all of you to help me! Believe me, it will be lots of work ahead and I want you to be a part of that and grow together with the company, financially and spiritually!

My door will always be open to all of you, with no exception, not to interfere with your jobs, but to hear suggestions, ideas or anything that may make our job better!

Another day I read in a book, that the true leader is not one who manages people, but one who makes new leaders! It is my wish to make all of you leaders!

He also made a list of his friends and enemies and sent each one an e-mail message, apologizing for his acts, words and gestures and also he forgave each one as well. He needed to go on with his life. He was thankful for his learning through the process!

And here I am sitting at a shack on the beautiful Arabian Sea talking to Tony, who I met a few days ago and who has told me his story. I decided to write this book because I found his experiences incredible and it is my belief that he could help people, through his experiences, mistakes and successes. A real story based on true facts, well lived with lots of passion and enthusiasm, where he has made many mistakes and learned plenty!

- *Now Tony, tell me, do you have any regrets?*

No, absolutely not; all my decisions were based on the information I had available at the moment and even if it was wrong, my decisions were right. How many things could I change, if I could come back in time knowing what I know today? Perhaps I will be living another life, I would not have the opportunities to learn, and as much as I have learned, I realize that we know so little. The learning process makes you feel like a grain in the sand in this infinite universe. We are so tiny!

If I have any regrets they would be the things I have not done (which were very few), because I never will know the outcome of it. I believe that we have to hear our heart and do what God tells us to do. Fly like a butterfly, it is fun!

- *How about the people who took advantage of you?*

From the depths of my heart I forgive everyone and I thank them for the learning experience. Believe me it would be easy to blame our lives on people, circumstances or things, but I would have stopped in time and never would have learned anything! It's like being dead. I believe the purpose of life is to learn.

- *Tell me about your experiences, learned lessons, for example your controller side.*

For a long time I believed that was just right, and controlled everybody around me. After all I was better than everyone, I had more experience and did what I believed was best for everyone. Of course, I always had the best of intentions. But intentions alone do not work.

Some time ago I decided to give my mother a brand new car. I had always wanted to do this. I knew what car, what brand, what color, what equipment, etc. When I gave her the car she was upset with me. I did not understand anything at the time. What did I learn? Before you give anything to anyone, especially family, ask permission to give, I believe that is the way it works!

When Kate Garden from the orphanage asked me to help her to build two new classrooms, since I knew all about it, I decided to build a whole new orphanage. When things went down and I could not help her anymore, she also was very upset at me, and told me: *"All I have asked you for were two classrooms, now I have this entire new building to take care of, why did you do it?"*

What did I learn? When you are going to give something to someone do not give more than they asked for. If possible give a little less. When you give more they will not like you better, and would think that there is no limit about what they can ask of you. So, next time give them what they ask for and no more.

Being a controller I was determined to do what was good for everyone. The thing is this, when you make a decision for other people, first you are calling them stupid! You're basically saying that they do not have enough knowledge to resolve the problem, and that you will take the effects of the decision you have made for them. If your decision is OK you did just right, but if things go wrong you will take all the responsibility and blame. With time you will discover that whomever you made a decision for will become handicapped, always depending on you to make their decisions, and by so doing you make them lose the best thing, the learning that comes from life.

What did I learn? The only person you should make decisions for is yourself, the only exception to the rule, is your children. In a few areas, I believe they should learn to make their own decisions from a very young age. If people ask, and only if they ask, you give your opinion, but never make any decisions for them. That belongs to each one of us. I learned to take care of myself only and myself first. Having flown many times they still show you how to use the oxygen mask, right? They always show that you must put your own mask on first, and then help others. That is the perfect example of how we should take care of our lives. Although society's codes give us the

wrong message all the time, we should believe that we are the center of the universe. That is the way! Be in control of your own life only! Only after helping yourself are you truly in a position to help others. And again, remember to help only when asked, give only what was asked and if you insist in helping, ask permission to help.

- *How about this theory of seeing happiness thought the eyes of people you like?*

Well, that was a big one for me! Somehow I learned that was the way! And being a controller helped, but boy, what a surprise. Look back at my life; every time I made the woman I loved happy, I was happy but when they were not happy anymore, I crashed every time!

Lesson learned: I was looking for happiness outside. Instead of looking inside, I was in search of the happiness outside, first in people, and second in things or possessions. When you base your happiness outside, you have no control and for sure you will fall, when they were not there for me anymore. I was afraid to be alone. I always need it to have someone, or something, so I would not stay alone. I was afraid of me! But knowing me now, it is so different, I actually like me, and it is fun to be with me now. I don't need anyone or things to make me happy anymore.

- *How about Success and Failure?*

These are for sure the major ingredients that move us to our destiny. If you look as an observer you will notice that it is all the same, success and failure are opposite forces that moves us to our destinations. Because the pain of failure is much more noticed we learned a lot more with our failures. I believe the best way to go on is to learn in the process. To make a great success of our learning opportunities whether they are from success or failure. And of course try to learn as much from success so that it keeps coming to you. The thing is success has no pain, and we just accept it, as truth. We really should learn the process of success just like we do through our failures; I know for a fact it is much more fun.

- *How do you see destiny?*

I believe that before we came to visit this planet, we have made plans for us while here. I believe it has already been written, it is up to us to make it easy or hard. And it is my understanding that the Creator is this very patient guy, since he knows nothing about time, you could do everything in one lifetime, or you could take a thousand lifetimes before you complete your mission here. So this is your free will: You can do it in circles (like I have), you can bounce to one side (I did that as well), and then be bounced to other side and so on. You will accomplish your mission regardless. So why not start it now.

- *How about the Envy force?*

This is perhaps the biggest negative force on earth, and all of us did it somehow or was a victim of it. Did you know that when you admire someone, or want to be just like that person this is an envy form? Whey we say, if I only had this… this is another form of envy. And it goes on; the only way to minimize this force is related to your capacity

for helping others. I believe having empathy for others, to be a good listener, to learn the true meaning of integrity and to help many people unconditionally is the best way to help keep this force away.

- *How about the hate?*

Who of us haven't suffered from this evil force? The challenge is this: Everything we give to the universe, comes back to us, and normally double! So we must remember this, every time we get that feeling of hate! I know this is crazy, but we are humans, and sometimes it is almost uncontrollable. You saw my own experiences with hate and anger. I let it go and it came back to me hard! We must try to control our emotions, not make any decisions when we are mad, wait until the next day, let the flame turn off, do not play the game they intend. You see, if you do not get it, it comes back to whoever tries to give it you. When somebody throws hate and anger at us, we must return love, empathy, patience and comprehension. Believe me that would make a difference.

- *How about the fear?*

I believe that fear only exists in our minds, and I believe that a person, who puts fear in front of anything, loses a unique chance to live life at the fullest! Why are we here? Why not learn more? Why not dare to try? Why not go for your dreams? Think what is the worst that could happen? Of course, I am not talking about the fear of jumping off of a bridge; I am talking about this fear created by our mind, and holds back most people from otherwise accomplishing many things.

- *How about the word "No"*

Next time someone says "No" to you watch the signs. Ninety percent of the times people are saying; tell me more, show in other ways, convince me. And for sure learn to say "No" without fear when your heart tells you to do it!

- *Why to wake up before sunrise?*

All of the technology and gadgets of the modern world makes us lazy. It has been proven that you don't need to sleep more than six hours a day; when you program yourself to wakeup before sunrise. First, for sure your day will be more productive, and at this time where the sun meets the moon you will discover the highest level of energy available to you. Now, the best of all, the picture of the sunrise that most people miss is something unbelievably unique and beautiful. Nature provides a different show every day, try it out, you will be surprised.

- *Why Yoga?*

It is a millenary art! Yoga helps to develop our concentration and meditation, and it is very good exercise for our body.

- *Now vegetarian! Isn't this too radical?*

Another day I heard the following: if you buy a racing horse for a million of dollars, would you care about the food you give to it? Of course I would! Now how about you, how much are your worth?

Don't you think you may be wisest to watch what you eat?

I have also read that, "You are what you eat" is a slogan that I love to use to show the mental aspect of vegetarianism. When animals are slaughtered, fear and aggression enzymes are shot into their cells from their glands and other organs, just as in humans, and are part of the dead carcass that goes on to the food store. They remain in the meat until the consumer ingests those same enzymes, which are molecularly very similar to those found in humans. Fruits and vegetables do not have emotions; therefore, when they are picked they do not release any emotion cells prior to digestion. The enzymes within fruits and vegetables supply the body with sufficient nutrients that will always uphold a healthy state of mind.

Have you ever seen what happens to a piece of meat that stays in the sun for three days? Meat can stay in the warmth of the intestine for at least four days until it is digested. It does nothing but wait for passage. Often, it usually stays there for much longer, traces remaining for up to several months.

Somehow I knew that someday I would convert to vegetarianism, it would be impossible some time ago, I could not see myself without meat. The incredible thing for me was the taste of the food I eat now, I can taste it so good, it's like the first time I have ever eaten every time. Not mentioning the weight I lost. I am just telling how I feel about it. It is not my intention to make people to feel wrong other ways, I believe that you just find for yourself, and if it is right will come to you, at the right time.

- *Now how about dancing?*

I know it sounds funny, and lot of guys think of it as a feminine thing, but in truth it is a way to communicate with the higher force! All the great masters practice to dance.

- *How about the thoughts?*

Did you know that every day we have sixty thousand thoughts, and that 95% of these thoughts you have thought the day before? So in reality, that's how everything starts in the thought process. We are what we think all the time! If you think something is going to go wrong, guess what? It will! This is perhaps the most important of all, to be aware of our thoughts and control them. We should not have any negative thoughts, we should have only positive thoughts, and we do it by selecting the kind of information that goes in to our mind. The secret is through meditation we can minimize the number of thoughts, so we have more connection time with the creator force.

- *How about the Meditation?*

After sex I believe this is the next big force available to man, to meditate is to silence the mind, no thinking about anything, in connection with the Creator. It is very hard to silence the mind, but with persistence we can do it! We should meditate

every day, at least for half an hour. I learned a lot from the book, *"Meditation: Achieving Inner Peace and Tranquility in Your Life" by Brian Weiss*. It teaches you how to meditate and comes with a CD; it is very good and worthwhile.

- *How about love and future relationships*?

Love? I always will believe in relationships! They teach us and make us grow. I believe that a man without a woman loses his motivation. The woman, love and sex help to bring the best of life. The power of love and sex to this day has not yet been fully discovered and I believe it to be the highest force in this universe. I do not believe anymore in formal relationships, because the day you sign a document, you are putting an end to it, as nobody belongs to anybody. Everyone must be like a bird out of the cage; you must be able to fly, if it is yours it will come back, if not it was never intended to be yours. How long it will last does not depend entirely on us, love comes and goes whenever it pleases, it can last one month, one year or a lifetime. I will not be the "Don Juan" that I always was, I will let the wind blow and show me the way. I have a feeling that it will be someone who cherishes the same values I do!

- *Tell me about what you understand about the power of Sex.*

Of course, like I said before, I don't believe there is a higher force than sex and love together, but sex alone could be great, as long it is conceived by both, should be used to the fullest, with no preconceptions, at any time, any place. There is no limit to the imagination so be open to new experiences. The big challenge is the misleading concept imposed by our society's codes and religions, where sex is a sin, specially applied to the woman! Forget it. This does not exist! The sin would be not to use this wonderful thing given to us! Go ahead, have fun.

- *How do you see the Woman?*

To me, women are the most powerful beings in the universe! Luckily they don't realize this! A woman who knows how to use her sensuality, that knows how to be feminine, regardless of her beauty or age, she has no idea what power she has over men, as a matter of fact if you look at history, all great men had a woman by his side and the conquering only happened when they were together in love, and when the loves finishes, everything goes. Look at my experiences.

- *How do you see the means of information?*

Information is one of the things that grows so fast in our world. It is Radio, TV, Newspaper, Internet, Books, Magazines, etc. I believe we have to be very careful about all the information we allow to enter to our minds. It normally works like this: bad information is free, and is everywhere. Look around, TV, newspaper, etc., 90% is bad information. This is the challenge. When we accept all this information in our minds; it takes away our capacity for creativity and imagination and replaces it with worries. And since our thoughts make our reality, this has been proved by quantum physics, and if we get all this bad information we will create bad things for sure.

I remember I used to check in to a hotel room and turn on the TV, usually to CNN. I would get nightmares sometimes, just by hearing all the bad news. See, information comes to us on the need basis. We do not have to worry about looking for it in any of those means of communication, believe me it will find you. Just as this book got in to your hands, this is not a coincidence.

• *And how about the synchronism? Are you still a believer?*

This is my biggest search! You probably already had one of those days where everything was perfect from the time you get up. Everything goes right, it seems like the universe is conspiring to help us. I believe this to be the big secret of life, the eternal synchronism; this is for sure the biggest success we can achieve in our lives. The synchronism, which most monks achieve. My goal in life is to live every day in perfect synchronism and that's what I wish for you as well: That your every day will be lived in perfect harmony.

• *And how about Tony's determination?*

Thanks to the Creator, this force overflows in me! This is the force we need to achieve our dreams, to never give up no matter what. We must focus on what we want and go on, don't ever go back; forward is the way! And that will give you self-confidence as well.

• *How do you perceive "Time?"*

Einstein already said that time does not exist! I believe it! Time was given to us, so we can learn the experiences; without it we'd have no learning. Have you ever had that strange sensation known as *"Déjà vu"*? Already felt that you knew a place, but you've never been there before? Notice when you met your friends. You knew that he or she would be your friend, and it is the same with enemies. It is my belief that somehow, sometimes we hit a major event for us, all of a sudden for one nanosecond we lose our sense of time and thus this sensation. So the best way of handling time, is to understand that it is not past or future, the only thing real is here and now! So just live every day, every moment like it was your last one.

• *How about Past and Future?*

Does not exist! Remember that time was given to us to learn, we must always remember this. The past is gone, it is like a good book you read and when you're done, you put it on the shelf, you can come back some time to review it, it's OK but we must let it go. And the future is the new book to be written, and we can only write with the power of here and now. We have no control of past or future, but we have full control of here and now!

• *So what is Real?*

Here and now. This is all we really have; it's with the power of here and now that we create everything, with this force you can manipulate just about everything;

literally nothing is impossible, you take the calls. But it must be done here and now. So remember this is the only real thing in our life and it is up to us make it a complete success our failure! We decide it!

- *How about the power of imagination?*

This is where everything begins, we must let it flow from us, with no worries, and go whatever it takes us. Believe me it will take you to your destiny.

Stop for a minute, wherever you are, and look around you. Everything you see or touch was some day the fruit of the imagination of someone, even our planet, the universe was created by imagination! I believe that my mission in this world is to show that every one of us is a son of the Creator, and as his children we have the power of the creation. It has been given to us to be used; we all have it, no exception! And I firmly believe that my mission here is to make you aware of that!

- *How about philanthropy?*

For sure I will keep up with my charities, but not the mega actions of the past. I believe that all the successful men of this world know the importance of helping others, but you must do it according to what is asked of you... Give to others only what was asked, never, ever more. And I will never again put all my eggs in one basket. I will donate to several institutions through our foundation. And the most important every day I will give according to God's will, no matter how small, either with money, gesture or thoughts. What is interesting is that it feels so good to give; it makes you feel like a kid who just got a lollypop. So next time someone asks for a coin at the traffic light, go for it. Share that feeling!

- *How about the power of money, how do you see it now?*

Oh boy, I messed up! I did not respect the power of money as you have seen in my life. Always sharing with everyone, everything. See, to me money always came so easily that I never stopped to look at this, and I always believed that was the same for everyone. And it is not!

Lesson learned: You should respect the power of money; don't think of it as a material thing but as a form of energy that exists and it is so real. When it comes to you, you should always save a portion of it. First, it makes you feel so good when you have it and gives you self-confidence. Second, the money you earn is yours and don't share it with anyone, including your family, friends, etc. Nobody needs to know if you have it, or how much you have. Remember, only your ego will benefit if you talk to others. And worst of all, the more you talk the more negative envy feelings will be attracted. So only share it if is extremely important, and you have 110% trust in the person! Odds are the person who is your friend today, may be your enemy tomorrow. Also, when others know about it they will have a thousand ways to help you to spend it, so never forget that you are the only one to decide about it. Love the money and respect it. Believe that it will help you a lot.

● *How you understand the EGO now?*

I tell you JoySun, that was a major one for me! Fasten you seat belts and hear my findings:

Ego in my opinion is like software. Try to imagine it for a moment. Think of your body as a computer, and of course to operate, we need software, and in our case the software is called ego. It comes in nine versions and each version has three subtypes. Wow! You must be thinking where did I get this. So let me give you some feedback:

The concept of the nine personality types (I call it software versions) has elements rooted in several traditional teachings such as the Seven Deadly Sins (beginning in the 4th century), and the Kabbalah (beginning in the 12th century) but the psychological descriptions of the types, on the other hand, are modern and are the work of modern authors.

The symbol (the circle with the inner triangle and hexagon) is ancient, dating back to Pythagoras or even earlier called Enneagram. The history and transmission of the Enneagram are mysterious and complicated affairs, although they become clearer if we distinguish between the Enneagram symbol and the descriptions of the nine types which are gaining such worldwide attention.

George Gurdjieff brought the symbol to the West around 1900, and Oscar Ichazo was the first to synthesize the symbol with elements of the teachings about the types. He was the first to identify the core qualities of each of the nine types. The psychiatrist Claudio Naranjo, who also introduced the panel method for gathering information about the types, furthered this work. Don Riso and Russ Hudson later added many new elements to the early Enneagram system. The lengthy systematic descriptions of the nine types are the most notable, but there are also the nine internal Levels of Development, the "inner logic" of each type.

When I first learned these, I thought it could be crazy, but as I went on and explored it, I found lots of explanation about what happens with me, the people around me and to the whole human race.

At the moment of our conception, the first set of CDs is put into us. That's the history part and it goes back until the first human was born on this planet. That's why we carry with us lots of the characteristics of the personalities of some of our ancestors (I am not talking about physical appearance!), and it comes with all good and bad things as well. Then as we grow inside of our mother's body we get the second set of CDs, that is the portion related to all experience from our parents, regardless if they are present or not. Believe or not, you get it! That's why lots of people even though they lost their parents at birth still have lots of characteristics of the parents. Makes senses? Doesn't it? Are you with me?

● *Tony, I must say this is crazy, but makes senses! So tell me more*.

It is my belief that we have full control of our lives before we experience life on earth, and depending on our learning, or mission we choose the proper software version. The functions of the software (EGO) are to survive first, and to minimize our knowledge beyond human life, so we can learn.

As we are born new CDs are entered; these are the society codes and as we grow older until the age of puberty several others CDs are put into us! And at about this age we are ready to "rock and roll".

Now this is where the challenge starts! As we receive the software, viruses come with it, and we have no way of knowing this, and lots of times the virus takes over and runs the software, instead of being the way it should be.

I will give some samples, so you can visualize this: Think of how many times you said *"no"* without intention of doing so. Think of how many times you overreact to a situation and later on you wonder why you did it. Think of why in some ways you adopt or reject some aspects of the personality of our parents. In my case, my father is so slow in doing things, and I reject this and I am so fast! But I also adopt the anger of my father.

The Enneagram explains why this happens, and you can clearly see that there is a child inside of us, running our lives sometimes, and had no knowledge that we have grown. When you learn to deal with all the problems you had in your childhood a whole new world comes to you. This is a discovery hard to describe; you must feel it to believe it.

Inside each of us there is a child, who needs to be born, the Enneagram shows how to balance your life so we can let this child be reborn.

We will never be able to change the version of software we come with, but we can understand it better and run it virus free. This is what I called understanding the ego; it is not bad, and you just understand what is good for you and not for others.

The ego plays with us. See the ego gives us false information. For example when I got to the top of my financial success, it was so important to show it to everyone. See this was ego talking. This did not make me feel better; as a matter of fact it helped the envy forces came on so strong! The ego was trained by societal codes, by advertising, TV, etc. It shows that to be acceptable by society you must have all those things in order to be approved by others. This is so misleading, and has no value for us. How many times I purchased things, just because somebody else had it, to show it or to be approved by someone. We don't need these things to be better, and I am not saying don't buy anything anymore, but just next time I will watch myself. I am getting it for me, for its quality, and not to keep up with the Jones! The thing is, we don't need to prove anything to anyone, the only person whose approval we need is ourselves; the people around us should like us for what we are and not for the things we have. Those are the values that should be truly valued.

See, the challenge is to understand how this happened. At our conception, we are spirit and body, the ego starts right after, and it is given to us by our ancestors, parents, family, friends, school, advertising, TV, etc. Then we have ego, body and spirit our challenge is to balance those three to be one.

If you want to find out more about this, there are several books on the subject, although I recommend participating in training so you will be able to learn techniques to understand the ego and its versions.

- *So, this is what you called Reborn?*

That's right! This is part of our free will, we have the power to be reborn, and we do not need to wait until we have a heart attack, an accident, lose everything or any other major disaster to reborn. You can be reborn today! Go ahead, start all over again. You may run the risk of making it right this time. That's what I have done!

- *How about the Exbrus Corporation?*

I have just one office left for Exbrus, the smallest one. I still have a lot of challenges ahead; my fight is to keep the lights on, my ego does not run it any longer, I don't mind if I don't have most of the shares anymore, as my goal is to make it grow and become a company on its own someday and this is my dream, that is my wish, that is my obsession and if I have to live 100 years to make it happen, I will do it, because dreams are what move us on to our journey, what makes you to wake up early, motivates us, what makes this life so wonderful. Whatever be our dreams, be the dream of a fisherman! This is what we are here to do and nothing in this universe has the power to take this out from us. And the Exbrus Corporation is my dream.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

LIFE'S MANUAL

Tony decided to make his life manual for him, based on his experience, and share it with us:

He will follow word by word.

TO BE DONE EVERY SINGLE DAY!!!

WAKE UP BEFORE SUNRISE: From this day on I will wake up every day without exception before sunrise, no exception, whether it's sunny, rainy, cold or hot. I will remember that this time has the best forces of nature available to us.

WALK: Every day I will walk for one hour, with no exception, being sunny, rainy, cold or hot. I will thank the universe for all the things given to me! I will remember that my body and soul will be thankful.

YOGA: Every day I will do Yoga exercises. I will remember that this will increase my capacity of concentration and meditation.

MEDITATION: I will dedicate 30 minutes every day to meditate. I will remember this is the connection to my Creator, and He will guide me to all my dreams!

THOUGHTS: I will reduce the number of thoughts and I will concentrate on positive thinking. I will remember that my thoughts make the reality!

DANCE: I will dance three times a week. I will remember that the gods celebrate when I dance!

FOOD: From this day on I will think before I eat anything. I will not eat anything that is dead! I will remember that we are natural vegetarian beings. I will remember the million-dollar race horse.

MONEY: I love money and I respect the power of money, I always will save 10% minimum of what I make from this day on, and nobody needs to know if I have it or how much. I will remember how much it can attract envy power!

FEAR: I have no fear! I fear nothing!

HATE: I will never allow this force; I will fight all the hate and anger with love, compassion, kindness, patience and empathy. I will never make a decision if I could not control this force. I will wait until next day!

NO: I always will remember that people 90% of the times are not really saying No, they want to know more about it! And if my heart tells me to say NO I will be very objective.

EGO: I will remember that ego is always playing with us. I will be conscious about my decisions; it will come from my heart and not from my ego.

DONATION: I will make good will every day! And only help those who want to be helped, and never give more than asked.

INFORMATION: I will only allow good information in my mind. I will avoid any negative information. I do not need this to be happy.

HERE AND NOW: I will remember every day that there's no past or future. The only reality is HERE AND NOW, and I will live every day of my life like it was my last day.

SYNCHRONISM: I see all my days in perfect synchronism. Through the power of imagination my days will be lived in perfect synchronism! Everything I need comes to me at the right time and day.

Dear Reader:

The book has ended. That is it. The story based on real lives and past experiences is over.

The following chapter is fiction.

If the things you have just heard from Tony in the last chapter make no sense to you, please don't read the next chapter.

If you think that life is bad, that you have control of nothing, you are just a spectator, please don't read the next chapter!

If you think that you are here to suffer, that everyone and everything is responsible for what you are, please do not read the next chapter.

If you are a person who believes that it is too late to start over again, or has enough knowledge, please do not read the next chapter.

If you only believe in bad endings, that a good ending only happens in books and movies, **please do not read the next chapter.**

Now on the other hand:

If you believe that your dreams can come true, and everything you wish can happen;

If you believe that you are the master of your life, and never is too late to start over again;

If you believe that money, success, fame, recognition is something that can be achieved by our desire and imagination;

If you believe that you are the son or daughter of the Creator; and just like him you can create whatever you wish to;

Please read the next chapter!

But before you begin please take a deep breath, and for the next few minutes try to visualize, use your imagination and help me to create reality as we go on….

Don't worry if the EGO helps you out a little, it is ok! There is no boundary to your dreams.…

CHAPTER TWENTY

CLAIRVOYANCE

(THE POWER OF SEEING THE FUTURE)

"The best way to predict the future is to invent it"

Alan Kay

"No one is ready for a thing until he believes he can acquire it."

Napoleon Hill

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.

Eleanor Roosevelt

"You have to believe that the universe will provide."

Steve Crosby

"To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe."

Anatole France

"Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe."

Saint Augustine

Sometime, in the near future…

Arica, Chile – It's about 5:00 P.M., the mobile phone is ringing and Tony answers, it is his secretary Hanna telling him they will be arriving in 15 minutes.

Although a few years have gone by Tony looks younger, and somehow the expression on his face is of extreme almost contagious enthusiasm.

He folds his suit; hand tailored for him in Hong Kong, and packs it in his suitcase.

In a few minutes the thump of blades announces the approach of this beautiful red helicopter. It lands, the door are opened and inside are Hanna and Captain Collins who says:

"Welcome, it is a pleasure having you aboard again!"

As they fly over the city of Arica, they over fly the Port and many warehouse roofs adorned with the Exbrus logo. The company seems to take more than a half of the port of Arica.

Soon they arrive at the airport of Arica, and as they approach they can see over 20 cargo planes in a line to take off and wow! They are Exbrus planes! As the helicopter door opens Tony is greeted by Carlos Costa.

"Hello, Tony, everything is set and your plane is ready to take off. And we have some wonderful news today. We broke our record again! The planes were all full today!"

And Tony replies: *"You are part of this! You are making our dreams come true. Congratulations to all our team! We could not have done it, if it hadn't been for everyone's faith and belief! Just like fishermen get together to pull the boat out of the water, we have made it together as well and I am proud of all of you!"*

"Thanks and congratulations for tomorrow! Replies Carlos."

Tony had done it again; he made Arica the distribution center for South America. And it became Exbrus' main hub. The location, the local laws and Tony's vision made it happen.

As they board the jet, they are greeted by Captain Monica and the first officer, Nicole *"We are ready to take off whenever you wish!"*

The sunset makes a unique view of Arica as the private jet takes off. During the flight the videophone rings and it is Arthur from Auckland, New Zealand, Exbrus Hub, and Tony answers:

"Hi, son!"

"Hi, Dad, I am calling to congratulate to you, I know tomorrow is a big day for you and I want you to know that I will be there with you!"

"Thanks, son, congratulations to all of us!!..."

The conversation goes on for a few minutes. Tony rests for the next two hours since they will stop in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

They land in Belo Horizonte and Tony has a meeting with the local Exbrus hub manager. A young man named Alvaro. They made the *"Take Off Minas Gerais"* project become a reality and it is now Brazil's main hub for Exbrus Corporation.

And at every place he goes there is excitement in the air. It is hard to describe. Alvaro is so motivated from meeting Tony. He tells him about all the challenges they have ahead, but everything is working as they have planned. Before he finishes the meeting, Alvaro says:

"Congratulation to you for tomorrow!"

And Tony again says thanks and assures them that everyone is part of this.

As they fly away from Belo Horizonte Tony places a call to Harrison, Amanda and Tatiane and talks to each one, telling them how much he loves them. He thanks them for all of those good thoughts his children had during difficult times, and tells them how important that had been for him and for lots of people. Again he mentions the fishing boat, if it hadn't been for everyone pulling in the same direction we could have never made it, he explains. And they all say: *"Congratulation for tomorrow, Dad!"*

Tony sleeps for a while because he will have a long day tomorrow.

It is about 6:00 A.M. the next day. They have just left from New York's LaGuardia Airport to a Manhattan hotel. At the hotel Tony takes a shower, calls for breakfast and puts his Chinese suit on. He looks brilliant now!

As he walks down the streets of New York he gets a copy of the Wall Street Journal, and the headline says:

EXBRUS to go public today!

The market has a very high expectation of the stocks for Exbrus Corporation, the fastest growing logistics operator in the world with over 100 locations worldwide…

The president of The New York Stock Exchange welcomes him to the opening day and Tony says:

"All dreams can come true, all you have to do is: To believe and have faith. I am the living proof of this and today my message to everyone, especially to our new stock holders, is: You've got to believe it! And you must have faith!"

As Tony finishes his speech the bells sound and the Wall Street Stock Market opens.

A few yards away a beautiful, sensual woman in a red dress has been gazing at Tony. Her look is like the one that Nancy Reagan used to have when staring at President Reagan. While Tony was speaking she was admiring him from a distance.

Tony comes close to her and says:

"Thanks for being at my side. For you I would do anything, even if I needed to publish a book, and make it a best seller, just to find you!"

"I love you!"

Wow! We have got to stop. What happened? Well, let's come back in time again:

After this book was published, of course, Tony made sure that all the financial and logistics people in the world knew about the book.

And the investor that he always believed someday would find his ideas feasible, finally appeared, after reading the book; the investor found Tony and helped him to make it a reality. And of course today he (the investor) is making more money than he could have ever imagined. And Tony is so glad to do it for him!

Tony found a friend and mate, also after the book was published, as she was also reborn and they have been together for some time now. Although they have no intention of ever getting married, because they understand that their spiritual bonding is much stronger than any signed paper and it is showed when you look at them. They learned to be best friends and mates at the same time.

She helps Tony in several areas as well. When you are around them you feel that love is in the air, because they love each other so much.

Well, at this point you may be asking what happened with me...

This book made a difference in my life as well. I discovered a friend I never knew I had. Getting to know Tony was the best thing that has ever happened to me in my whole life! To be around him is something that is incredible. Together we make a team!

After publishing this book I was invited by several people to give seminars about *"The Life Manual".* And boy! This has been wonderful, helping other people to achieve their goals, and find their mission, destiny, or whatever you may call it, is something out of this world. Making people realize that they can be creators made me the happiest man on earth. My current project is to write a *"Movie Script"* for this book, and who knows? Maybe someone will actually like the idea!

Tony has helped lots of people and he has always managed to be with me wherever I go. Tony's mate has done her part as well, showing the power of the woman, showing women how to be sensual and feminine...

The other day in a seminar a reporter asked me what were my business aspirations and I paused and said:

"There will be always challenges and this is what I love!"

WHO IS WONG, JOYSUN?

Every time someone writes a book many assume that their resume must be full of professional accolades such as university degrees, technical skills and so many other things required by our society.

Well, I like to think of my self as a kid, maybe a teenager. My experiences have been simple ones such as:

I tried to drive a big tractor when I was nine and almost hit my home, trying to jump start it; I have walked in a swamp and got stuck there, and had to wait for my father to rescue me;

I once started a big fire by mistake; I have loved so much and yet discovered it wasn't true love! I have walked on rain and got used to it!

I made a hiding camp just for me, and used to stay there when my mom would try to get me for something I did wrong; I tried to count the stars of the sky, unsuccessfully;

I stole flowers from the neighbors' yard; I had fallen in love, but was so afraid to tell her; I had woken up at the middle of the night and could not go back to sleep;

I have stolen candies from the supermarket and when I got home my mom made me go back and return it; I challenged the big kid at the school and got knocked down;

I have thought that I was superman and tried to fly; I felt on my ass trying to climb up a ladder; I have talked with the mirror and thought that I was Merlin;

I already felt alone in the middle of thousand people, missing just one person; I have tried to forget some people and discovered those same ones are so hard to forget;

I have made many people smile and those same people made me cry; I played with the pan covers thinking it was a driving wheel and I was Airthon Senna;

I have tried to run away from home and came back a minute later; I ran so fast, so I could avoid someone to cry; I believed in people, yet the same people betrayed me; I have gotten drunk and couldn't remember a thing from the night before;

I love to write and to dream about the almost impossible and I have traveled to so many places, met so many people, yet the place that warms my heart the most is called home;

I have slept in the grass and saw the Moon become the Sun; I cried to see friends leaving, but discovered that soon new friends arrive, and life is full of this coming and going without reason.

There have been so many things, picture frames taken by the emotion's lenses, which have been kept by this safe called my heart.

So, as you can see, I am a human being trying to learn all of the things that this beautiful planet Earth has to teach us.

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BOOKS

"Are You Ready to Succeed?" by Srikumar Rao
"Chakras, Auras, and the New Spirituality" by Genevieve Lewis Paulson & Stephen J. Paulson
"Conversations with God: An Uncommon Dialogue" by Neale Donald Walsch
"How Psychic Are You? 76 Techniques to Boost Your Innate Power" by Julie Soskin
"How To Get Everything You Ever Wanted" by Ph.D., Adrain Calabrese
"How to Master the Art of Selling" by Tom Hopkins
"Love, Life, Laughter: The Three L's of Joyful Living" by Osho
"Many Lives Many Masters" by Brian L. Weiss
"Maverick: The Success Story Behind the World's Most Unusual Workplace" by Ricardo Semler
"Meditation: Achieving Inner Peace and Tranquility in Your Life" by Brian Weiss
"Psychic Development for Beginners" by William W. Hewitt
"Sixth Sense" by Stuart Wilde
"Smart Choices for a Successful Life" by Abílio Diniz
"The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People " by Stephen R. Covey
"The Alchemist: A Fable about Following Your Dream" by Paulo Coelho
"The Celestine Prophecy" by James Redfield
"The Greatest Psychologist Who Ever Lived: Jesus and the Wisdom of the Soul" by Mark W. Baker
"The Life You Were Born to Live: A Guide to Finding Your Life Purpose" by Dan Millman
"The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari" by Robin S. Sharma.
"The Power of Intention" by Wayne W. Dyer
"The Power of Your Subconscious Mind" by Joseph Murphy
"The Spirituality of Success: Getting Rich with Integrity" by Vincent M. Roazzi
"Think & Grow Rich" by Napoleon Hill
"Warrior of the Light: A Manual" by Paulo Coelho
"Way of the Peaceful Warrior: A book that changes lives" by Dan Millman
"Who are You? 101 Ways of Seeing Yourself" by Malcolm Godwin
"You Can Heal Your Life" by Louise Hay

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